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AMERICAN LECTURES ON THE HISTORY OF RELIGIONS,

SECOND SERIES—1896-1897.

RELIGIONS OF PRIMITIVE PEOPLES.

BY

DANIEL G. BRINTON, A.M., M.D., LL.D., Sc.D.
Professor of American Archæology and Linguistics in the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia

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ANNOUNCEMENT.

ON the 24th of December, 1891, fifteen persons interested in promoting the historical study of religions united in issuing a circular-letter, inviting a conference in the Council Chambers of the Historical Society of Philadelphia, on the 30th of the same month, for the purpose of instituting "popular courses in the History of Religions, somewhat after the style of the Hibbert lectures in England, to be delivered annually by the best scholars of Europe and this country, in various cities, such as Baltimore, Boston, Brooklyn, Chicago, New York, Philadelphia, and others." There participated in this conference personally or by letter from Philadelphia, Rev. Prof. E. T. Bartlett, D.D., Rev. George Dana Boardman, D.D., Prof. D. G. Brinton, M.D., Sc.D., Horace Howard Furness, LL.D., Prof. E. J. James, Ph.D., Prof. Morris Jastrow, Jr., Ph.D., Provost Wm. Pepper, M.D., LL.D., of the University of Pennsylvania, Hon. Mayer Sulzberger, Mrs. Cornelius Stevenson, and Talcott Williams, LL.D.; from Baltimore, Prest. D. C. Gilman, LL.D., of the Johns Hopkins University, and Prof. Paul Haupt, Ph.D.; from Boston

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and Cambridge, Rev. E. E. Hale, D.D., Prof. C. R. Lanman, Ph.D., Prof. D. G. Lyon, Ph.D., and Prof. C. H. Toy, LL.D.; from Brooklyn, Rev. Edward S. Braislin, D.D., and Prof. Franklin W. Hooper of the Brooklyn Institute; from Chicago, Prest. W. R. Harper, Ph.D., of the University of Chicago, and Rev. Prof. Emil G. Hirsch, Ph.D.; from New York, Rev. Prof. C. A. Briggs, D.D., LL.D., Rev. Prof. Francis Brown, D.D., Rev. G. Gottheil, D.D., Prof. R. J. H. Gottheil, Ph.D., Rev. John P. Peters, Ph.D., and Rev. W. Hayes Ward, D.D., LL.D.; from Ithaca, N. Y., Prest. J. G. Schurman of Cornell University, and Hon. Andrew D. White, LL.D.

At this conference Prof. Jastrow submitted a plan for establishing popular lecture courses on the historical study of religions by securing the co-operation of existing institutions and lecture associations, such as the Lowell, Brooklyn, and Peabody Institutes, the University Lecture Association of Philadelphia, and some of our colleges and universities. Each course, according to this plan, was to consist of from six to eight lectures, and the engagement of lecturers, choice of subjects, and so forth were to be in the hands of a committee chosen from the different cities, and representing the various institutions and associations participating. This general scheme met with the cordial approval of the conference,

which voted the project both a timely and useful one, and which appointed Dean Bartlett, Prof. Jastrow, and Dr. Peters a committee to elaborate a plan of organisation and report at an adjourned meeting. That meeting was held at the Union Theological Seminary in New York City, February 6, 1892, and, as a result, an association was organised for the purpose of encouraging the study of religions. The *terms* of association then adopted, with slight modifications introduced later, are as follows:

1.—The object of this Association shall be to provide courses of lectures on the history of religions, to be delivered in various cities.

2.—The Association shall be composed of delegates from institutions agreeing to co-operate, or from local boards, organised where such co-operation is not possible.

3.—These Delegates—one from each Institution or Local Board—shall constitute themselves a council under the name of the "American Committee for Lectures on the History of Religions."

4.—The Council shall elect out of its number a President, a Secretary, and a Treasurer.

5.—All matters of local detail shall be left to the Institutions or Local Boards, under whose auspices the lectures are to be delivered.

6.—A course of lectures on some religion, or phase of religion, from an historical point of view, or on a subject germane to the study of religions, shall be delivered annually, or at such intervals as may be found practicable, in the different cities represented by this Association.

7.—The Council (*a*) shall be charged with the selection of the lecturers, (*b*) shall have charge of the funds, (*c*) shall assign the time for the lectures in each city, and perform such other functions as may be necessary.

8.—Polemical subjects, as well as polemics in the treatment of subjects, shall be positively excluded.

9.—The lecturer shall be chosen by the Council at least ten months before the date fixed for the course of lectures.

10.—The lectures shall be delivered in the various cities between the months of October and June.

11.—The copyright of the lectures shall be the property of the Association.

12.—One half of the lecturer's compensation shall be paid at the completion of this entire course, and the second half upon the publication of the lectures.

13.—The compensation offered to the lecturer shall be fixed in each case by the Council.

14.—The lecturer is not to deliver elsewhere any of the lectures for which he is engaged by the Committee, except with the sanction of the Committee.

The Committee appointed to carry out this plan as now constituted, is as follows:

Prof. C. H. Toy, of Harvard University, Chairman.

Prof. Morris Jastrow, Jr., of the University of Pennsylvania, Secretary.

Rev. John P. Peters, D. D., of New York, Treasurer.

Prof. Richard J. H. Gottheil, of Columbia University.

Prof. Paul Haupt, of the Johns Hopkins University.

Prof. F. W. Hooper, of the Brooklyn Institute.

Prof. J. F. Jameson, of Brown University.

Prof. F. K. Sanders, of Yale University.

President J. G. Schurman, of Cornell University.

For its first course the Committee selected as lecturer Prof. T. W. Rhys Davids, Ph.D. LL.D., of London, England, who delivered a course of lectures in the winter of 1894–95 on The History and Literature of Buddhism, at the following places, with the co-operation of the institutions named:

Baltimore, before the Johns Hopkins University.

Boston, at the Lowell Institute.

Brooklyn, at the Brooklyn Institute.

Ithaca, before the Cornell University.

New York, before the Columbia University.

Philadelphia, before the University of Pennsylvania Lecture Association.

Providence, before the Brown University Lecture Association.

Professor Davids' lectures were published in 1896 by arrangement with Messrs. G. P. Putnam's Sons, the publishers to the Committee, as the First Series of The American Lectures on the History of Religions. As the second lecturer, the Committee chose Prof. Daniel G. Brinton, A.M., M.D., LL.D., Sc.D., of Philadelphia; and as the subject, "The Religions of Primitive Peoples." Dr. Brinton, who holds the chair of American Archæology and Linguistics in the University of Pennsylvania, is a leading authority on the languages and customs of the American Indians, and on Anthropology in general. His studies have led him also into the domain of Prehistoric Archæology and Comparative Mythology. As the product of his investigations in the latter field, he published as early as 1868, *The Myths of The New World*, which at once attracted the attention of scholars, and has passed through several

editions since. In 1876 he issued an important contribution to the Science of Religion, under the title, *The Religious Sentiment*. In addition to this he has published a large number of works on American Languages on Anthropology, and Archæology, the most notable of which is the series Library of Aboriginal American Literature. His papers, scattered in various scientific periodicals of this country and Europe, number several hundred.

The lectures delivered by him under the auspices of the Committee represent the ripe fruit of many years of study, and will, we feel assured, be welcomed as an important contribution to a subject now attracting much attention.

The lectures were delivered during the winter of 1896–97, at the following places:

Boston, (Lowell Institute).
Brooklyn, (Brooklyn Institute).
Ithaca, (Cornell University).
New Haven, (Yale University).
New York, (New York University).
Philadelphia, (University of Pennsylvania).
Providence, (Brown University Lecture Association).

The object of this Association is to provide the best opportunities for bringing to the knowledge of the public at large the methods and results of

those distinguished specialists who have devoted their lives to the study of the religions of other countries and other ages. It is safe to say that there is no other subject of modern research which concerns all classes so nearly as the study of religions. It is the hope of the Committee to provide courses at intervals of two years, or oftener, if the encouragement which the undertaking receives warrants it, and the practical difficulties involved in securing competent lecturers do not make it impossible.

Arrangements have been made for a course of lectures during the winter of 1897–98, by the Rev. T. K. Cheyne, M.A., D.D., Professor of Old Testament Interpretation at Oriel College, Oxford, and Canon of Rochester; whose subject will be Religious Thought and Life among the Hebrews in Post-Exilic Days, to be followed in 1898–99 by a complementary course on Religious Life and Thought among the Hebrews in Pre-Exilic Days, by Professor Karl Budde, of the University of Strasburg, Germany.

JOHN P. PETERS,
C. H. TOY,
MORRIS JASTROW, JR.,
Committee on Publication.

May 10, 1897.

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RELIGIONS OF PRIMITIVE PEOPLES

RELIGIONS OF PRIMITIVE PEOPLES.

LECTURE I.

The Scientific Study of Primitive Religions—Methods and Definitions.

CONTENTS :—Ethnology Defined—The Scientific Study of Religions—It is not Theology—Its Methods : 1. The Historic Method ; 2. The Comparative Method ; 3. The Psychologic Method—Strange Coincidences in Human Thought — Conspicuous in Primitive Religions—"Primitive" Peoples Defined—The Savage Mind—Examples—Means of Study: 1. Archæology ; 2. Language : 3. Folk-Lore ; 4. Descriptions of Travellers—Examples : The Early Aryans, Etruscans, Semites, Egyptians, American Tribes, Australians, Polynesians, etc.—"Religions" Defined—Compared with "Superstitions"—No One Belief Essential to Religion—Atheistic Religions—Fundamental Identity of Religions—No Tribe Known Devoid of a Religion—How the Opposite Opinion Arose—Earliest Men probably had No Religion—No Signs of Religion in Lower Animals—Power of Religion in Primitive Society—True Source of Religion.

THE youngest in the sisterhood of the sciences is that which deals with Man. In its widest scope it is called Anthropology, and as such includes

both the physical and mental life of the species, from the beginning until now. That branch of it which especially concerns itself with the development of man as indicated by his advance in civilisation, is known as Ethnology.

When we analyse the directive forces which have brought about this advance, and whose study therefore makes up Ethnology, they can be reduced to four, to wit, Language, Laws, Arts, and Religion. Do not imagine, however, that these are separable, independent forces. On the contrary, they are inseparable, constituent elements of an organic unity, each working through the others, and on the symmetrical adjustment of all of them to the needs of a community depend its prosperity and growth. No one of them can be omitted or exaggerated without stunting or distorting the national expansion. This lesson, taught by all ages and confirmed by every example, warns us to be cautious in giving precedence to one over the others in any general scheme; but we can profitably separate one from the others, and study its origins and influence.

On this occasion I invite your attention to Religion, and especially as displayed in its earliest and simplest forms, in the faiths and rites of primitive peoples. I shall present these to you in accordance with the principles and methods of Ethnology.

There is what has been called the "science of religion." The expression seems to me a little presumptuous—or, at least, premature. We do not yet speak of a "science of jurisprudence," although we have better materials for it than for a science of religion. I shall content myself, therefore, in calling what I have to offer a study of early religions according to scientific methods.

I need not remind you that such a method is absolutely without bias or partisanship; that it looks upon all religions alike as more or less enlightened expressions of mental traits common to all mankind in every known age.* It concedes the exclusive possession of truth to none, and still less does it aim to set up any other standard than past experience by which to measure the claims of any. It brings no new canons of faith or doctrine, and lays no other foundation than that which has been laid even from the beginning until now.

But just there its immediate utility and practical bearings are manifested. It seeks to lay bare those eternal foundations on which the sacred edifices of religion have ever been and must ever be erected. It aims to accomplish this by clearing away the incid-

* "Religion," observes Professor Toy, "must be treated as a product of human thought, as a branch of Sociology, subject to all the laws that control general human progress."—*Judaism and Christianity*, p. 1.

ental and adventitious in religions so as to discover what in them is permanent and universal. Those sacred ideas and institutions which we find repeated among all the early peoples of the earth, often developing in after ages along parallel lines, will form the special objects of our investigation. The departures from these universal forms, we shall see, can be traced to local or temporary causes, they turn on questions of environment, and serve merely to define the limits of variability of the ubiquitous principles of religion as a psychic phenomenon, wherever we find it.

This is not "theology." That branch of learning aims to measure the objective reality, the concrete truth, of some one or another opinion concerning God and divine things; while the scientific study of religions confines itself exclusively to examining such opinions as phases of human mental activity, and ascertaining what influence they have exerted on the development of the species or of some branch of it. Therefore it is never "polemic." It neither attacks nor defends the beliefs which it studies. It confines itself to examining their character and influence by the lights of reason and history.

The methods which we employ in this process of reduction are three in number: 1. The Historic Method; 2. The Comparative Method; 3. The

Psychologic Method. A few words will explain the scope of each of these.

The Historic Method studies the history of beliefs and the development of worship. It seeks to discover what influences have been exerted on them by environment, transmission, heredity, and conquest, and to bring into full relief what is peculiar to the tribe or group under consideration, and what is exotic. For in one sense it is true that every nation and tribe, even every man, has his own religion.

Such ethnic traits merit the closest scrutiny. They are so marked and constant as to modify profoundly the history of even the ripest religions. It is quite true, as has been observed by an historian of Christianity, that "there is in every people an hereditary disposition to some particular heresy," * that is, to altering any religion which they accept in accordance with the special constitution of their own minds.

The Comparative Method notes the similarities and differences between the religions of different tribes or groups, and, gradually extending its field to embrace the whole species, endeavors, by excluding what is local or temporal, to define those forms of religious thought and expression which are common to humanity at large.

* Rev. John M. Neale, *History of the Holy Eastern Church*, vol. i., p. 37.

The Psychologic Method takes the results of both the previous methods and aims to explain them by referring the local manifestations to the special mental traits of the tribe or group, and the universal features to equally universal characteristics of the human mind.

The last, the Psychologic Method, is the crown and completion of the quest; for every advanced student of religion will subscribe to the declaration of Professor Granger, that "all mythology and all history of beliefs must finally turn to psychology for their satisfactory elucidation." * In other words, the laws of human thought can alone explain its own products.

And here I must mention a startling discovery, the most startling, it seems to me, of recent times. It is that these laws of human thought are frightfully rigid, are indeed automatic and inflexible. The human mind seems to be a machine; give it the same materials, and it will infallibly grind out the same product. So deeply impressed by this is an eminent modern writer that he laws it down as "a fundamental maxim of ethnology" that, "we do not think; thinking merely goes on within us." †

* Granger, *The Worship of the Romans*, p. vii.

† A. H. Post, *Grundriss der ethnologischen Jurisprudenz*, Bd. i., s. 4.

These strange coincidences find their explanation in experimental psychology. This science, in its modern developments, establishes the fact that the origin of ideas is due to impressions on the nerves of sense. The five senses give rise to five classes of ideas, the most numerous of which are those from the sense of sight, visual ideas, and those from the sense of hearing, auditory ideas. The former yield the conceptions of space, motion, and lustre (colour, brightness, etc.), the latter that of time. From the sense of touch arise the "tactual" impressions, which yield the ideas of power and might, through the sensations of resistance and pressure, pleasure and pain. From these primary ideas (or perceptions), drawn directly from impressions, are derived secondary, abstract, and general ideas (apperceptions) by comparison and association (the laws of Identity, Diversity, and Similarity).

Under ordinary conditions of human life there are many more impressions on the senses which are everywhere the same or similar, than the reverse. Hence, the ideas, both primary and secondary (perceptions and apperceptions), drawn from them are much more likely to resemble than to differ.

The consequence of this is that the same laws of growth which develop the physical man everywhere into the traits of the species, act also on his psychi-

cal powers, and not less absolutely, to bring their products into conformity.

This is true not only of his logical faculties, but of his lightest fancies and wildest vagaries. "Man's imagination," observes Mr. Hartland, "like every other known power, works by fixed laws, the existence and operation of which it is possible to trace; and it works upon the same material,—the external universe, the mental and moral constitution of man, and his social relations." *

In reference to my particular subject, Professor Buchmann expressed some years ago what I believe to be the correct result of modern research in these words: "It is easy to prove that the striking similarity in primitive religious ideas comes not from tradition nor from the relationship or historic connections of early peoples, but from the identity in the mental construction of the individual man, wherever he is found." †

We can scarcely escape a painful shock to discover that we are bound by such adamantine chains. As the primitive man could not conceive that inflexible mechanical laws control the processes of nature, so are we slow to acknowledge that others, not less rigid, rule our thoughts and fancies.

* *The Science of Fairy Tales*, p. 2.
† *Zeitschrift für Völkerpsychologie*, Bd. xi., s. 124.

Nowhere, however, is the truth of it more clearly demonstrated than in primitive religions. Without a full appreciation of this fact, it is impossible to comprehend them; and for the lack of it, much that has been written upon them is worthless. The astonishing similarity, the absolute identities, which constantly present themselves in myths and cults separated by oceans and continents, have been construed as evidence of common descent or of distant transmission; whereas they are the proofs of a fundamental unity of the human mind and of its processes, "before which," as a German writer says, "the differences in individual, national, or even racial divisions sink into insignificance." * Wherever we turn, in time or in space, to the earliest and simplest religions of the world, we find them dealing with nearly the same objective facts in nearly the same subjective fashion, the differences being due to local and temporal causes.

This cardinal and basic truth of the unity of action of man's intelligence, which is established just as much for the arts, the laws, and the institutions of men as for their religions, enables me to present to you broadly the faiths of primitive peoples as one

* J. J. Honegger, *Allgemeine Culturgeschichte*, Bd. i., s. 332. "Similar conceptions," observes Professor Bastian, "repeat themselves, under fixed laws, in localities wide apart, in ages far remote." —*Grundzüge der Ethnologie*, p. 73.

coherent whole, the product of a common humanity, a mirror reflecting the deepest thoughts of the whole species on the mighty questions of religious life and hope, not the isolated or borrowed opinions of one or another tribe or people.

Of course, the recognition of this principle does not diminish the attention to be paid to the ethnic or local developments of culture and to the borrowing or transference of myths and rites. Wherever this can be shown to have occurred, it is an adequate explanation of identities; but in tribes geographically remote, the presumption is that such identities are due to the common element of humanity in the species.

Such similarities are by no means confined to the primitive forms of religion; but in them they are more obvious, and their causes are more apparent; so for that reason, a study of such primitive forms is peculiarly remunerative to one who would acquaint himself with the elements of religion in general. No one, in fact, can pretend to a thorough knowledge of the great historic religions of the world who has not traced their outlines back to the humble faiths of early tribes from which they emerged.

He must have recourse to them for like reasons that the biologist, who would learn the morphology of a mammal, betakes himself to the study of the

cells and fibres of the simplest living organisms; for in their uncomplicated forms he can discover the basic activities which animate the highest structures.

I must define, however, more closely what ethnologists mean by "primitive peoples"; because the word is not used in the sense of "first" or "earliest," as its derivation would indicate. We know little, if anything, about the earliest men, and their religion would make a short chapter. "Primitive" to the ethnologist means the earliest of a given race or tribe of whom he has trusty information. It has reference to a stage of culture, rather than to time. Peoples who are in a savage or barbarous condition, with slight knowledge of the arts, lax governments, and feeble institutions, are spoken of as "primitive," although they may be our contemporaries. They are very far from being the earliest men or resembling them. Hundreds of generations have toiled to produce even their low stage of culture up through others, far inferior, of which we can form some idea by the aid of language and prehistoric archæology.

They are therefore not degenerates, ruins fallen from some former high estate, some condition of pristine nobility. That is an ancient error, now, I hope, exploded and dismissed from sane teaching. Even the rudest of savages is a creation of steady, long-continued advancement from the primeval man.

We have the evidence of what he was, in his implements and weapons preserved in pre-glacial strata and in the mud-floors of the caves he inhabited.

These announce to us a law of progressive advancement for all races, over all the earth, on the same lines of progress, toward the same goals of culture, extremely slow at the outset, and unequal especially in later ages, but vindicating the unity of the species and the identity of its hopes and aims everywhere.

You will understand, therefore, that by "primitive peoples," I mean savage or barbarous tribes, wherever they are or have been, and that I claim for them brotherhood with ourselves in all the traits that go to make up oneness of species. A few hundred years ago the ancestors of the English-speaking nations were as savage as the savagest, without temples to their gods, in perpetual and bloody war, untamed cannibals; add a few thousand years to the perspective, and man over the whole globe was in the same condition.

The savage state was the childhood of the race, and by some the mind of the savage has been likened to that of the child. But the resemblance is merely superficial. It rather resembles that of the uncultivated and ignorant adult among ourselves. The same inaccurate observation and illogi-

cal modes of thought characterise both. These depend on certain mental traits, which it is well to define, because they explain most of the absurdities of primitive religions.

The first is, that the idea is accepted as true, without the process of logical reasoning or inductive observation. In other words, what appears true to the individual is accepted by him as true, without further question. His dreams seem real to him; therefore they are real. What the tribe believes, he believes, no matter what his senses tell him.

When an Australian Black is on a journey and fears being overtaken by the night, he will place a lump of clay in the forks of a tree, believing that thus he can arrest the motion of the sun and prolong the day. It is not a religious act, but a piece of natural science current in the tribe, which no experience will refute in their minds.*

Just such a notion recurs among the Mandan Indians. Captain Clark observed near their villages upright poles fifteen or twenty feet long with bundles of female clothing tied to them. He asked what they signified, and one of the old men explained thus: "If you watch the sun closely, you will see that he stops for a short time just as he rises, and again at midday, and as he sets. The

* E. M. Curr, *The Australian Race*, vol. i., p. 50.

reason is that he rests a few moments to smoke in the lodges of three immortal women, and we offer them this clothing that they may be induced to say a kind word to him in our behalf. We were told by our ancestors not to forget this." * The fact that the orb does not stop was of no consequence in the face of this tradition.

The second trait is the extreme nervous susceptibility of savages. It is much higher than ours, although the contrary is often taught. Their emotions or feelings control their reasoning powers, and direct their actions. Neurotic diseases, especially of a contagious character, are very frequent among them, and they are far more prone than ourselves to yield to impressions upon their sensory organs. The traveller Castren relates that a sudden blow on the outside of a tent of the Samoyeds will sometimes throw the occupants into spasms; and the missionary Livingstone draws a touching picture of young slaves dying of "a broken heart," when they heard the song and music of the villagers and could not join in the revelry." †

* W. P. Clark, U. S. A., *Indian Sign Language*, p. 241.

† This subject is fully discussed by Flügel, *Zeit. für. Völkerpsychologie*, Bd. xi.; by Prof. James Sully in his *Studies of Childhood;* and by Dr. Friedmann, *Centralblatt für Anthropologie*, Bd. i. The last mentioned argues that the mind of the savage has more points of resemblance to the insane than to the child mind. The higher emotional susceptibility of savages can be illustrated by abundant examples.

These two traits, therefore, the acceptance of the idea as subjectively true, and the subordination of reason to the feelings, are the main features of the undeveloped mind. They are common in civilised conditions, but are universal in savagery.

The question has often been considered whether the mental powers of the savage are distinctly inferior. This has been answered by taking the children of savages when quite young and bringing them up in civilised surroundings. The verdict is unanimous that they display as much aptitude for the acquisition of knowledge, and as much respect for the precepts of morality, as the average English or German boy or girl; but with less originality or "initiative."

I have been in close relations to several full-blood American Indians, who had been removed from an aboriginal environment and instructed in this manner; and I could not perceive that they were either in intellect or sympathies inferior to the usual type of the American gentleman. One of them notably had a refined sense of humour, as well as uncommon acuteness of observation.

The assertion, however, is frequently advanced that in their savage state they are of the earth earthy, that their whole time is taken up with the gratification of sensuous desires, and that they neither think nor care for speculations of a super-sensuous or spiritual character.

The investigation of this point is desirable in a study of their religions, for upon it depends the decision whether we can assign to their myths and rites a meaning deeper than that of deception, or passion, or frivolity.

To reach a decision, I take the most unfavourable example which can be suggested,—the Australian Blacks. Considering their number and the extent of their territory, they were, when discovered, the most degraded people on the globe. They had nothing which could be called a government, and some dialects have no word for chief. None of them could count the fingers on one hand, for none of the dialects had any words for numerals beyond *three* or *four*. Mr. Hale, the eminent ethnographer, who was among them in 1843, says that they evinced "an almost brutal stupidity," "downright childishness and imbecility." *

Their natural feelings and moral perceptions seem incredibly blunted. I can best illustrate this by narrating an incident which happened at a frontier station, one of many of the same character.

The white family employed a native girl named Mattie about fifteen years old. She had a baby, which one day disappeared. On inquiry she stated

**Ethnography and Philology of the United States Exploring Expedition*, p. 108.

that her mother had said that she was too young to take care of a baby, and had therefore cooked and eaten it with some of her cronies. Mattie cried in telling this. Because her baby had been killed? Oh no! but because her mother had given her none of the tidbits, but only the bones to pick!*

Yet even these seemingly hopeless brutes have an intricate system of kinship and marriage laws, the most rigid of any known. Marriage with sisters or first cousins is not only forbidden, "It is not conceived as possible." The prohibitions about food are so absolute that the natives would perish of hunger rather than break them. Some of their religious ceremonies entail voluntary mutilations of the most dreadful description. Their mythology is extensive, and I shall have frequent occasion to quote it. And so far are they from an obtuse indifference to the future and the past, an accurate observer who lived among them says: "They wonder among themselves and talk at night about these things, and the past existence of their race, and how they came here."†

Savage tribes are distinctly unlettered. They be-

* The case was not exceptional. Among several tribes it was an established custom for a mother to kill and eat her first child, as it was believed to strengthen her for later births. See examples in *Zeitschrift für Völkerpsychologie*, Bd. xiv., pp. 460, *sq.*

† E. Palmer in *Jour. Anthrop. Inst.*, vol. xiii., pp. 294, 399.

long in a stage of culture where the art of writing, as we understand it, is unknown. They have no bibles, no sacred books, by which to teach their religions. What means have we, therefore, to learn their opinions about holy things?

The question is one which demands an answer, the more because I shall often refer to the religions of tribes long since extinct, and whose very names are forgotten. How do we dare to speak with confidence of what they thought about the gods?

We can do so, and it is one of the marvels of modern scientific research, quite as admirable as its more familiar and practical results.

Our sources of information regarding primitive peoples may be classed under four titles, Archæology, Language, Folk-lore, and Ethnographic descriptions.

By the first of these, archæology, we become acquainted with the objective remains of beliefs long since extinguished. The temples, idols, and altars of dead gods reveal to us the attributes assigned to them by their votaries and the influences they were believed to exert. We can interpret their symbols, and from rude carvings re-construct the story of their divine struggles. Especially, from ancient sepulchres and the modes of disposal of the dead which they reveal, can we discern what hopes vanished nations held of a life to come.

In this direction, we are powerfully aided by that close similarity of mental products in like stages of culture, to which I have referred, and shall often refer. By comparing a living tribe with one which ten thousand years ago was in a similar condition as shown by its relics, we can with the highest probability interpret the use and motives of the latter's remains.

We are further assisted in such research by the critical analysis of the early forms of language, which is one of the achievements of modern linguistics. By establishing the identities of names, we can trace the diffusion of myths, and by tracing such names to their proper dialect and original meaning, we can locate geographically and psychologically the origin of given forms of religions. In fact, the value of linguistics to the study of religions cannot be overestimated. No one is competent to describe the sacred beliefs of a nation, its myths and adjurations, unless he has a sufficient knowledge of its tongue to ascertain the true sense of the terms employed in its liturgies.

But these so obvious applications are the least that language can furnish. Its impress on religions goes much deeper. It was well remarked by the Chevalier Bunsen that in primitive conditions the two poles of human life, around which all else cen-

tres, are language and religion, and that each conditions the other, that is, imparts to it special forms and limits.

For instance, those languages which have grammatic gender almost necessarily divide their deities according to sex *; those in which the passive voice is absent or feebly developed, will be led to associate with their deities higher conceptions of activity than where the passive is a favourite form; those which have no substantive verb cannot express God as pure being, but must associate with Him either position, action, or suffering.

In the speech of the Algonquin Indians, there is no grammatic distinction of sex; but there is broad discrimination between objects which are animate and those which are inanimate. When the Catholic missionaries brought to them the rosary, the natives at first spoke of it as inanimate; but as their reverence for it grew, it was transferred to the animate gender, and was thus on its way to a personification.†

The third source of information is that which is called folk-lore. Its field of research is to collect the relics and survivals of primitive modes of thought and expression, beliefs, customs, and notions, in the

* Professor Sayce believes that the Sumerian of ancient Babylonia was genderless; and that the local gods were first endowed with sex on being adopted by the Semites.—*Hibbert Lectures*, p. 176.

† Cuoq, *Lexique Algonquine*, p. 21, note.

present conditions of culture. It is, therefore, especially useful in a study like the present, the more so on account of the extraordinary permanence and conservative character of religious sentiments and ceremonies. Among the peasantry of Europe, the paganism of the days of Julius Cæsar flourishes with scarcely abated vigour, though it may be under new names. "The primitive Aryan," writes Professor Frazer,* "is not extinct; he is with us to-day." And another English writer does not go too far when he says: "There is not a rite or ceremony yet practised and revered among us that is not the lineal descendant of barbaric thought and usage."† It is this which gives to folk-lore its extremely instructive character for the student of early religion.

The fourth source of information is the description of native religions by travellers. You might expect this to be the most accurate and therefore valuable of all the sources; but it is just the reverse. Omitting the ordinary tourist and globe-trotter, who is not expected to know anything thoroughly, and never deceives the expectation, even painstaking observers, who have lived long with savage tribes, sometimes mastering their languages, are, for rea-

* *The Golden Bough*, Preface.

† Ed. Clodd, *Myths and Dreams*, p. 168.

sons I shall presently state, constantly at fault about the native religions. We must always take their narratives with hesitation, and weigh them against others by persons of a different nationality and education. Indeed, of all elements of native life, this of religion is the most liable to be misunderstood by the foreign visitor.

Bearing in mind these various sources of information, what tribes, about which we have sufficient knowledge, could fairly be considered as examples of primitive conditions?

Beginning with those remotest in time, I believe we know enough about the early Aryans to claim it for them. The acute researches of recent scholars, so admirably summed up in the work of Professor Schrader, have thrown a flood of light on the domestic, cultural, and religious condition of the pristine epoch of Aryan society from the side of language; while the tireless prosecution of prehistoric archæology in Europe has put us into possession of thousands of objects illustrating the religious arts and usages then in vogue. Classical mythology and ritual, as well as modern folk-lore, lend further efficient aid toward reconstructing the modes and expressions of their sacred thought.

A very ancient people, possibly of Aryan blood, but more likely, I believe, to have come from North

Africa and to be of Libyan affinities, were the Etruscans. They were extremely religious, and their theological opinions deeply coloured the worship of the Romans. We know the general outlines of their doctrine of the gods, and its simplicity and grandeur bespeak our admiration. I shall draw from this venerable "Etruscan discipline" from time to time for illustrations.

Quite as much may be said of the diligence of the explorers and scholars in the field of Semitic antiquity. We can without room for doubt trace the stream of Semitic religious thought through the Hebrew Bible and the Assyrian and Babylonian cuneiform tablets to a possibly non-Semitic source among the Accadian or Sumerian population, which ten thousand years ago had already begun to develop an artistic and agricultural life on the Babylonian plain. Numerous students have restored the outlines and motives of this ancient faith, whose forms and doctrines bind and shape our lives in America to-day.

Of the possibly still older culture of Egypt, so much cannot be said. The original creeds of its religion have been less successfully divined. Like its early inscriptions, they were erased and overlaid so often by the caprice or prejudice of successive dynasties, and so profoundly modified by foreign

influences, that with our present knowledge they are no longer legible.*

Turning to the religions which have preserved their primitive forms to modern times, the first place should be conceded to those of America. Up to four hundred years ago, all of them, throughout the continent, had developed from an unknown antiquity untouched by the teachings of Asian or European instructors; for no really sane scholar nowadays believes either that St. Thomas preached Christianity in the New World in the first century, or that Buddhist monks in the seventh or any other century carried their tenets into Mexico and Guatemala.

Many of the American tribes, moreover, lived in the rudest stages of social life, ignorant of agriculture, without fixed abodes, naked or nearly so, in constant bloody strife, destitute even of tribal government. Here, if anywhere, we should find the religious sentiment, if it exists at all, in its simplest elements.

On the other hand, the first European explorers found in Peru, Yucatan, and Mexico numerous tribes

* Besides the general works on Egyptian religion, I may note R. Pietschmann, "Aegypt. Fetischdienst und Götterglaube," in *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, Bd. x., s. 153, *sq.* He points out that there was no unity in the ancient cults of Egypt, as the gods were those of the nomes only. The worship of Osiris did not prevail generally till after the sixth dynasty (p. 165).

in almost a civilised condition, builders of huge edifices of carved stones, cultivating the soil, and acquainted with a partly phonetic system of writing. Their mythology was ample and their ritual elaborate, so that it could scarcely be called primitive in appearance; but in all these instances, myth and ritual were so obviously identical in character with those of the vagrant tribes elsewhere, that we shall make no mistake in classifying them together.

Equally isolated and surely as rude as the rudest were the native Australians, the wavy-haired, bearded, black people who sparsely inhabited that huge island, two thousand miles wide by two thousand five hundred miles long. Isolated by arid stretches of desert, the struggle for life was incessant, and there is little wonder that we find them in an incredibly debased condition associated with unending war and cannibalism. For these very reasons, their religious notions deserve our closest scrutiny.

The vast island-world of Polynesia was peopled by related tribes, usually of limited cultivation, but with a rich mythology, of which we have many strange and beautiful fragments. They are primitive in form and expression, with singular differences as well as analogies to the beliefs of continental tribes.

Africa, with its countless dusky hordes, offers a less promising field to the student of the earliest phases

of religion than we might expect. The conditions of the arts, and the ruins of foreign-built cities unite with the classic historians to show that in remote ages the influence of distant nations, from Egypt, Arabia, and India, on the typical black population was profound and far-reaching. The white Hamites of the north crossed the Sahara and extended their arms far into the Soudan; while on the east coast, the black Hamites and Arabic Ethiopians drove the aborigines far to the South. Later, Arabic influences penetrated into the interior, dissolving the older faiths or discolouring them. Thus, little of the independent development of religious thought remains in Africa. Its most primitive features are probably best preserved in the extreme South, among the Hottentots, Bushmen, and Zulus.

On the Asian continent, some of the Sibiric tribes in the north and some of those of Dravidian descent in the mountains of Hindoostan preserved to a late day their primitive traits; while the fading remnants of the Veddahs in Ceylon and the black islanders of Melanesia still continue in the simple faiths of their ancestors.

These hints will indicate the chief sources from which I shall draw the material to illustrate the rudimentary stages of religious thought and act, the embryonic period, as it were, of those emotions and

beliefs which to us, in riper forms, are so dear and so holy.

Here I must define what is meant in these lectures by "religions." Most people confine that term to the historic faiths and cults, calling others "superstitions" and "paganisms." Some will not acknowledge that there is any religion whatever except their own; all other beliefs are heresies, apostasies, or heathenisms. Even such an intelligent writer as Sir John Lubbock expressed doubts in one of his works whether he ought to apply the word "religions" to the worship tendered their deities by savages.

On the other hand, a Protestant will freely denounce the practices of the Roman Church as "superstitions," and will claim that they are degenerations of religion; while among Protestants, the Quaker looks upon all external rites as equally "superstitious."

No such distinctions can be recognised in ethnology. The principle at the basis of all religions and all superstitions is the same, as I shall show in the next lecture, and the grossest rites of barbarism deserve the name of "religion" just as much as the refined ceremonies of Christian churches. The aims of the worshipper may be selfish and sensuous, there may be an entire absence of ethical intention, his rites may be empty formalities and his creed im-

moral, but this will be his religion all the same, and we should not apply to it any other name.*

There is no one belief or set of beliefs which constitutes a religion. We are apt to suppose that every creed must teach a belief in a god or gods, in an immortal soul, and in a divine government of the world. The Parliament of Religions, which lately met at Chicago, announced, in its preliminary call, these elements as essential to the idea of religion.

No mistake could be greater. The religion which to-day counts the largest number of adherents, Buddhism, rejects every one of these items.† The Jewish doctrine of the Old Testament, the Roman religion of the time of Julius Cæsar, and many others, have not admitted the existence of a soul, or the continuance of the individual life after death.‡ Some believe in souls, but not in gods; while a divine government is a thought rarely present in savage

* Some have explained superstition as "degenerate religion"; others as "religious error"; others (Pfleiderer) as "a pathological condition of normal belief"; but all such definitions depend on the view-point. As Roskoff remarks: "The man who is plunged in superstition is sure to hold it for the only true faith, and is contented with it so long as he is not troubled with doubts."—*Das Religionswesen der Naturvölker*, p. 17.

† See T. Rhys Davids, *Indian Buddhism*, p. 29 (Hibbert Lectures), and in the first volume of the present series of lectures.

‡ Death was to the Roman the *somnum eternale*. Prof. Sayce remarks of the ancient Chaldeans that they had no definite belief in an after life.—*Hibbert Lectures*, p. 358.

minds. They do not, as a rule, recognise any such principle as that of good and evil, or any doctrine of rewards and punishment hereafter for conduct in the present life.

There is, in fact, not any one item in any creed which is accepted by all religions; yet a common source, a common end in view, and the closest analogy of means to that end, bind all in one, representing an indefeasible element of human nature, the lowest containing the potentiality of the highest, the highest being but the necessary evolution of the lowest. The same promptings which led the earliest of men to frame their crude ideas about the supersensuous around them have nourished and developed religions ever since, and keep them alive to-day. Temples may crumble and creeds decay, but the spirit remains the same.

This inherent unity of all religious feeling and expression was long ago perceived by St. Augustine. In a well-known passage of his *Retractations* he makes the striking remark: "Res ipsa, quæ nunc religio Christiana nuncupatur, erat apud antiquos, nec defuit ab initio generis humani"; "That which is now called the Christian religion existed among the ancients, and in fact was with the human race from the beginning."

This is, essentially, the maxim of modern eth-

nology. The religiosity of man is a part of his psychical being. In the nature and laws of the human mind, in its intellect, sympathies, emotions, and passions, lie the well-springs of all religions, modern or ancient, Christian or heathen. To these we must refer, by these we must explain, whatever errors, falsehoods, bigotry, or cruelty have stained man's creeds and cults; to them we must credit whatever truth, beauty, piety, and love have hallowed and glorified his long search for the perfect and the eternal.

If this opinion of the place of religion in ethnology is correct, we should not expect to find any considerable number of men, in the present epoch of the race's development, devoid of some form of worship and belief.

The fact is that there has not been a single tribe, no matter how rude, known in history or visited by travellers, which has been shown to be destitute of religion, under some form.

The contrary of this has been asserted by various modern writers of weight, for example by Herbert Spencer and Sir John Lubbock, not from their own observation, for neither ever saw a savage tribe, but from the reports of travellers and missionaries.

I speak advisedly when I say that every assertion

to this effect when tested by careful examination has proved erroneous.*

What led to such a mistaken opinion is easily seen. The missionaries would not recognise as religion the beliefs which were so different from and inferior to their own. The god of the heathens was to them no god whatever. When they heard stories of ghosts, magic, and charms, they spurned these as old wives' fables, and confidently proclaimed that the tribe had no religion. Thus it was with those who first worked in South Africa. They returned and proclaimed that atheism was "endemic" among the tribes of that region. Later observers, acquainting themselves with the languages of the Blacks, found an ample mythology and an extensive ritual of worship.†

Another example may be quoted from a recent description of the Motu tribe of New Guinea. The writer, a missionary, denies that they have any religion whatever; but immediately proceeds to describe their numerous "superstitious" rites, their belief in spirits, their ceremonial law, etc.! ‡

* The question has been carefully examined by G. Roskoff in his work *Das Religionswesen der Rohesten Naturvölker* (Leipzig, 1880) He conclusively refutes the assertions that tribes have been encount ered without religion.

† Calloway, *Religious System of the Amazulus*, p. 113.

‡ Rev. W. Y. Turner in *Jour. Anthrop. Institute*, vol. vii., p. 492.

Another and potent cause of error was the unwillingness of the natives to speak to foreigners of the sacred mysteries. This is not peculiar to them, but obtains everywhere. In the polite society of our own cities, it is held to be an infraction of etiquette to question a person about his religious opinions and practices. Greater repugnance would be felt were it known that the questioner could have no sympathy with one's opinions, and would probably hold them up to derision and contempt.

Even a stronger deterrent motive closes the mouth of most savages giving such information. It is *tabu*, prohibited under severe penalties, to impart it to any stranger, or even to another tribesman. The tendency to secrecy, to the esoteric, belongs to all religions, and especially to those in which the emotions are predominant, as is the case with primitive cults.

Even with a willing narrator, it is impossible to acquire a true understanding of a religion without a knowledge of the language in which its myths and precepts are couched. Ordinary interpreters are worse than useless. Captain Bourke tells us that time and again he was assured by Mexican interpreters who had lived for years among the Apaches that this tribe had no religion and no sacred ceremonies.

"These interpreters," he adds, "had no intention to deceive; they were simply unable to disengage

themselves from their own prejudices; they could not credit the existence of any such thing as religion save and except that taught them at their mother's knees." * If these Spanish-Mexicans, who had passed half their lives among the natives, denied them religion, what can we expect the ordinary traveller to learn in a few weeks' visit?

Religion, therefore, is and has been, so far as history informs us, universal in the human race. Can we go farther back in time than history leads us, and say that it has ever been an element of humanity?

The resources at our command to answer this inquiry lie in prehistoric archæology and linguistics.

Beyond historic ages, and beyond those referred to by vague tradition, which we may call semi-historic, lies the epoch of culture called from its chief industry the Stone Age, divided into the more recent or "neolithic" period, and the older or "palæolithic" period.

Concerning the former, there can be no doubt whatever that religion exercised a tremendous influence on men's minds. We have numberless sepulchres of peoples then living, mighty mounds and massive temples, such as Stonehenge and Karnac; we have them by the tens of thousands,

* *Medicine Men of the Apache*, pp. 499, 500.

over vast areas, remaining as indubitable proofs that the chief market of the time of those early sons of the soil was to worship the gods and prepare for death. We have their idols, amulets, and mystic symbols, their altars and their talismans, so as to leave no doubt of their deep devotion. No archæologist questions this.

When we come to palæolithic man, however, especially to those ancient tribes who lived in Western Europe when the great continental glacier chilled the air of Southern France to an arctic frigidity, or still earlier, in that pre-glacial summer when the hippopotamus found a congenial home in the river Thames, we are not so sure. Among the many thousands of artificially shaped stone and bone objects which have been collected from that horizon, there is not one which we can positively identify as of religious purport, as a charm, amulet, fetish, or idol. The rare instances in which the bones of the men of that age have been preserved reveal no positive signs of funerary rites.

For these reasons some able archæologists, such as Professor G. de Mortillet, have maintained that man, as he then was, had not yet developed his religious faculties. The evidence for this, is, indeed, negative, and fresh discoveries may refute it, but the present probability is that in the infancy of the race there

was at least no objective expression of religious feeling.*

This appears supported by testimony from another quarter. When we can trace back the sacred words of a language to their original roots, we find that these roots do not have religious associations, but refer to concrete and sensuous images. There must have been a time, therefore, when those who spoke that original dialect employed these words without any religious meaning attached to them, and therefore had no religious ideas expressed in their language, and presumably none defined in their minds.

I am not sure, however, that this argument is so valid as some writers claim. Those early men may have had other religious terms, now lost; and the current belief among linguists that all radicals had at first concrete meanings is one I seriously doubt. Mental processes and feelings are just as real as actions, and in the aboriginal tongues of America are expressed by radicals as distinct and as ancient as any for sensuous perception.

There must, however, have been a time in the progress of organic forms from some lower to that highest mammal, Man, when he did not have a re-

* The question is carefuly discussed by Hoernes, *Urgeschichte des Menschen*, p. 93, *sq.*, who disputes Mortillet's opinion. The latter is given in his *Préhistorique Antiquité de l' Homme*, p. 603, *sq.*

ligious consciousness; for it is doubtful if even the slightest traces of it can be discerned in the inferior animals.

Mr. Darwin, indeed, put in a plea that his favourite dog manifested the same psychical traits which lead savages to believe in gods or spiritual agencies*; and lately Professor Pinsero, of Palermo, has argued that the anthropoid apes cultivate a worship of serpents, even burying them with considerable ceremony, and placing in their tombs a provision of insects for their consumption in their future life!†

But these scientific speculations have not found general acceptance, and even Professor Pinsero himself, while conceding religion to the ape, denies it to prehistoric man of the earlier epochs.

We may conclude, therefore, that the development of the religious side of man's nature began at a very early period in his history as a species, though probably it was extremely vague or practically absent in his first stadia; and that it is something distinctly human, and not shared in any definite form by even the best developed of the lower animals.

It is the only trait in which he is qualitatively separated from them. They, too, communicate knowledge by sounds; they have governments and arts;

* *The Descent of Man*, p. 95.

† Quoted in *L' Anthropologie*, vol. viii., p. 334.

but never do we see anywhere among them the notion of the Divine. This was the spark of Promethean fire which has guided man along the darksome and devious ways of his earthly pilgrimage to the supremacy he now enjoys.

The Greek fable tells us of the shepherd lad Endymion, who fed his sheep on Mt. Latmus, and dreamed of no higher ambition, until in his sleep the goddess Selene descended from heaven and embraced him. Inspired by her divine touch, he waked to noble aspirations, and went forth to become monarch of Elis and father of a line of kings.

So the human mind groped for dateless ages amid brutish toils and pleasures, unconscious of grander aims; until the thought of God, rising to consciousness within the soul, whispered to it of endless progress and divine ideals, in quest of which it has sought and will ever continue seeking, with tireless endeavour and constantly increasing reward.

This question settled, another arises. The religions thus found everywhere among the rudest tribes, did they take root and exert a deep influence on the individual and society, or were they superficially felt, and of slight moment in practical life?

In reference to this I can scarcely be too positive. No opinion can be more erroneous than the one sometimes advanced that savages are indifferent to their

faiths. On the contrary, the rule, with very few exceptions, is that religion absorbs nearly the whole life of a man under primitive conditions. From birth to death, but especially during adult years, his daily actions are governed by ceremonial laws of the severest, often the most irksome and painful characters. He has no independent action or code of conduct, and is a very slave to the conditions which such laws create.

This is especially visible in the world-wide customs of totemic divisions and the *tabu*, or religious prohibitions. These govern his food and drink, his marriage and social relations, the disposition of property, and the choice of his wives. An infraction of them is out of the question. It means exile or death. The notions of tolerance, freedom of conscience, higher law, are non-existent in primitive communities, except under certain personal conditions which I shall mention in a later lecture.

As has been tersely said by Professor Granger, "Religion in the ancient world comprised every social function"; and the identity of its rules with those of common life is correctly put by Professor Thiele in these words: "The idea of a separation between Church and State is utterly foreign to all the religions of antiquity." *

* Granger, *Religion of the Romans*, p. 21; Thiele, *Hist. of the Egyptian Religion*, Introd.

What was true in those ancient days is equally so in this age among savage peoples. Let us take as an example the Dyaks of Borneo. A recent observer describes them as utter slaves to their "superstitions," that is, to their religion.* "When they lay out their fields, gather the harvest, go hunting or fishing, contract a marriage, start on an expedition, propose a commercial journey, or anything of importance, they always consult the gods, offer sacrifices, celebrate feasts, study the omens, obtain talismans, and so on, often thus losing the best opportunity for the business itself."

This is equally the case with most savage tribes. Mr. J. Walter Fewkes informed me that it was a severe moral shock to the Pueblo Indians to see the white settlers plant corn without any religious ceremony; and a much greater one to perceive that the corn grew, flourished, and bore abundant crops! The result did more to shatter their simple faith than a dozen missionary crusades.

To the simple mind of the primitive man, as to the Mohammedan to-day, there is no such thing as an intermediate law, directing phenomena, and capable of expression in set terms. To him, every event of nature and of life is an immediate mani-

* Dr. Schwaner, in H. Ling Roth, *The Natives of Sarawak*, vol. ii., App. p. clxii.

festation of the power of God, *eine Kraftprobe Gottes.**

Religion, however, does not begin from any external pressure, no matter how strong this may be. If it has any vitality, if it is anything more than the barrenest ceremonial, it must start within, from the soul itself. Thus it did in primordial ages in all tribes of men.

Therefore in studying its origin and pursuing its development we must commence with its fonts and springs in the mind of man, its psychic sources. These understood, we can proceed to its three chief expressions, in Words, in Objects, and in Rites.

* H. Grimme, *Mohammed*, p. 38.

LECTURE II.

The Origin and Contents of Primitive Religions.

CONTENTS:—Former Theories of the Origin of Religions—Inadequacy of these—Universal Postulate of Religions that Conscious Volition is the Source of Force—How Mind was Assigned to Nature—Communion between the Human and the Divine Mind—Universality of "Inspiration"—Inspiration the Product of the Sub-Conscious Mind—Known to Science as "Suggestion"—This Explained—Examples—Illustrations from Language—No Primitive Monotheism—The Special Stimuli of the Religious Emotions: 1. Dreaming and Allied Conditions—Life as a Dream—2. The Apprehension of Life and Death and the Notion of the Soul—3. The Perception of Light and Darkness; Day and Night—The Sky God as the High God—4. The Observation of Extraordinary Exhibitions of Force—The Thunder God—5. The Impression of Vastness—Dignity of the Sub-Conscious Intelligence.

IN the last lecture we have seen that all tribes of men, so far as is known, have had religions. How this happened, what general cause brought about so universal a fact, has puzzled the brains of philosophers and theologians. Their explanations have been as various and as conflicting on this as on most other subjects.

A goodly number of philosophers, ancient and

modern, have looked upon religion of any kind as a symptom of a diseased brain. Thus Empedocles, in the fifth century B.C., declared it to be a sickness of the mind, and Feuerbach, in the present century, has characterised it as the most pernicious malady of humanity. Regarding all forms of religions as delusions, detrimental therefore to sound reason and the pursuit of truth, they believed the human intellect could freely employ its powers only when liberated from such shackles.

Another ancient theory still survives, that which has its name from Euhemerus, a Sicilian writer of the time of Alexander the Great. He claimed that religions arose from the respect and reverence paid to kings and heroes during their lives, continued by custom after their deaths. Under the modern name of "ancestor worship" this has been maintained by Herbert Spencer and others as the primitive source of all worship.

Yet another philosophical opinion has been that religions were due to the craft of rulers and priests, who, by the aid of superstitious fear, sought to keep their subjects and votaries in subjection. These tricksters invented the terrors of another world to secure their own power and places in this one. This opinion was a favourite about the time of the French Revolution and is mirrored in the poems of Shelley,

who announced it as one of his missions, "to unveil the religious frauds by which nations have been deluded into submission." *

The prevailing theory of the great world-religions, Christianity and Mohammedanism, has been substantially that of Empedocles. They have regarded all the religions of the world as cunning fabrications of the Devil and his imps, snares spread for human souls; always with one exception however: each excepts itself. This is the view so grandly expressed in Milton's *Paradise Lost* and quite common yet in civilised lands.

On the other hand, a strong school of Christian writers, led early in this century by Joseph de Maistre and Chateaubriand and represented in our tongue by Archdeacon Trench, have asserted that all faiths, even the most savage, are fragments and reminiscences, distorted and broken indeed, of a primitive revelation vouchsafed by the Almighty to the human race everywhere at the beginning. These have occupied themselves in pointing out the analogies of savage and pagan creeds and rites with those of Christianity, in proof of their theory.

Not remote from them are the teachers of the doctrine of the "inner light," that "light which lighteth every man who cometh into the world," disclos-

* In his Preface to *The Revolt of Islam*.

ing unto him the existence of God and the fact of his soul. They teach, with Wordsworth, that

> "Trailing clouds of glory do we come
> From God who is our home;"

and that it is by perversion or wilful blindness that any man avers ignorance of these primal truths.

The philosophic aspect of this theory has been presented by the master minds of Kant, Hegel, and Schelling. Kant identified the idea of God with the Ideal of Reason, the perfect Intelligence, toward which all minds, even the humblest, must necessarily strive. Hegel, in a fine passage of his *Philosophy of Religion*, urges the study of pagan and primitive religions with a view to define their real significance and to discover the grains of truth which ever lie within them, the reason and the goodness which give them life.

The modern German ethnographers, such as Peschel, Ratzel, and Schurtz,* have not ventured to follow these earlier thinkers of their nation, but have contented themselves with tracing the origin of religion to one characteristic of the human intellect, to wit, the notion of Cause. The relation of cause and effect, they claim, is so ingrained in the think-

*O. Peschel, *Völkerkunde*, s. 255; F. Ratzel, *Ethnographie*, Bd. i;—Schurtz, *Catechismus der Völkerkunde*, s. 88.

ing mind that it inevitably leads all men to assume causes, such as spiritual agencies, when others are not visible.

This popular view seems weak; for not only is the relation of cause to effect a mere assumption, and, indeed, rejected by exact science; but it dodges the very question at issue, which is to explain why spiritual agencies are imagined as causes of material effects.

Similar objections lie to deriving primitive religions from a vague "perception of the Infinite," or a *sensus numinis*, some *deus in nobis*, "warning us," as Virgil says, "by his quick motion." These are unclear, unsatisfying expressions, offering no rational explanation, and full of equivocations.

A favourite theory in all times is that religions arose from the emotion of fear. It was taught by the Latin poet Petronius in a famous line, where he says "Fear first made the gods"; and it has been strenuously advocated by many modern philosophers and ethnologists.

Now if this emotion is alone sufficient to evoke religious feeling, why, I ask, is that feeling absent in the craven and timid lower animals? Why is it so feeble in many a coward? Why has it been so strong in many a hero?

Moreover, the spirit of many early religions is the

reverse of that of fear. They are, as Dr. Robertson Smith correctly said, "predominantly joyous."

These are proofs enough that this ancient and popular notion rests on a misconception of facts. The "fear of God" enters, indeed, into every religion; but religion itself did not arise from it. We must already have a notion of God, before we can fear Him.

If we are going to apply the scientific method to the study of religions we must offer an explanation for their existence which is intelligible, which is verifiable, and which holds good for all of them, primitive or developed, those of the remotest ages and those of to-day. Only thus can the ethnologist treat them as one element of the history of Humanity, a property of the species.

This has not been done, so far as I know, up to the present time. In fact, much of the teaching of modern anthropology has been calculated to deter it. The outspoken advocacy of atheism and materialism by the French School has led its disciples to consider the effort unprofitable;* and the acceptance of the doctrine of "Animism" as a sufficient explanation of early cults has led to the neglect, in English-speaking lands, of their pro-

* The eminent anthropologist Broca denied that *religiosity* is a distinctive trait of humanity. See further in Hovelacque et Hervé, *Précis d'Anthropologie*, pp. 634–636.

founder analysis. Such a writer, for instance, as Andrew Lang does not hesitate to teach that, "The origin of a belief in God is beyond the ken of history and speculation." *

The real explanation of the origin of religion is simple and universal. Let any man ask himself on what his own religious belief is founded, and the answer, if true, will hold good for every member of the race, past and present. It makes no difference whether we analyse the superstitions of the rudest savages, or the lofty utterances of John the Evangelist, or of Spinoza the "god-intoxicated philosopher"; we shall find one and the same postulate to the faith of all.

This universal postulate, the psychic origin of all religious thought, is the recognition, or, if you please, the assumption, *that conscious volition is the ultimate source of all Force.* It is the belief that behind the sensuous, phenomenal world, distinct from it, giving it form, existence, and activity, lies the ultimate, invisible, immeasurable power of Mind, of conscious Will, of Intelligence, analogous in some way to our own; and,—mark this essential corollary, —*that man is in communication with it.*

What the highest religions thus assume was likewise the foundation of the earliest and most

* *Myth, Ritual, and Religion*, vol. i., chap. xi.

primitive cults. The one universal trait amid their endless forms of expression was the unalterable faith in Mind, in the super-sensuous, as the ultimate source of all force, all life, all being.

Science and Christianity teach the same, but with this difference: the progress of observation has taught us the existence of certain uniform sequences which we call "laws of nature," based solely on Mind, but representing its processes of realisation. The savage knew not these. He imagined every motion in nature was the immediate exhibition of Will, his own will in his own motions, some seen or unseen will in other motions. The seen were of another being like himself; the unseen were to that extent unknown, and these were his gods.

I repeat, wherever we find the divine, the spiritual agency, set forth in myth or symbol, creed or rite, we find it characterised by two traits: it is of the nature of the human mind, that is, super-sensuous; and it is the ultimate source of power. It will be my aim to show the expressions of these universal postulates of the religious sentiment in the rudest faiths of the world.

You may ask, by what process of thinking did primitive man assign mind to nature. The process is extremely simple, and is illustrated by the action

of any child. Let one be accidentally hurt by an empty rocking-chair in motion; at once, it is angry at the chair, and is gratified to see it whipped! The child-mind assigns to the object the will and the sensations of which it is conscious in itself. This is the simplest explanation it can imagine for action.

Precisely so is it with the savage man. Wherever he perceives motion, independent of a living being, he assumes the presence of a conscious agent, not visible to his senses. As Professor Sayce remarks of the early Chaldeans: "To them the spiritual, the *Zi*, was that which manifested life, and the test of the manifestation of life was movement." * This is universally true of primitive faiths.

But this was not enough. To most if not all primitive men, movement was not the only manifestation of life. To them, the immovable, the rock, the mountain, any inanimate object, was likewise a conscious spiritual agency, a thinking being. This, too, has its explanation in one of the simplest, most elementary traits of mind, the sense of Personality. To the undeveloped reason, the Other is ever conceived as Another, a Self, and is clothed with the attributes of *the* Self, of the thinking Ego.

* *Hibbert Lectures*, p. 328. Darwin has a parallel passage, *Descent of Man*, p. 95.

This is always the case in the tales of children and the myths of savage tribes.*

These are the earliest concepts of the religious faculty; but they would have been powerless to seize upon the emotions and to develop the great religions of the world, had they not been supported by that which is the corner-stone of every creed on earth, the corollary I mentioned, to wit, the direct communion between the human and the divine mind, between the Man and God.

This is the one trait shared by the highest as well as the lowest, it is the one proof of authenticity which each proclaims for itself. I shall tell you of religions so crude as to have no temples or altars, no rites or prayers; but I can tell you of none that does not teach the belief of the intercommunion of the spiritual powers and man. Every religion is a Revelation—in the opinion of its votaries. Those which are called the "book-religions" depend mainly upon the *record* of a revelation, while in all primitive faiths inspiration is actual and constant. The

* "Everything, animate or inanimate, which has an independent being, or can be individualised, possesses a spirit, or, more properly, a shade (*idahi*, a shadow, or reflection)." Washington Matthews, *Ethnog. of the Hidatsa*, p. 48. This expresses the general *Weltanschauung* of the savage mind. Let it be remembered that it is also characteristic of the poetic, or personifying representation of nature, and thus belongs to the highest artistic expressions of the human mind as well as to its feeblest utterances.

human soul, regarded in its origin as an emanation of the Divine, is in its nature omniscient when in moments of ecstasy it frees itself from its material envelope.*

When an Australian native is asked if he has ever seen the great Creator, Baiame, he will reply: "No, not seen him, but I have felt [or inwardly perceived] him."† A Basuto chief replied to the question whether his people knew of God before the missionaries came: "We did not know Him, but we dreamed of Him."

All shamanism is based on a direct relation to divinity. The shaman is an inspired prophet and healer, and believes as firmly in his inspiration as do his credulous adherents. From shamanism was developed in India the practice known as *Yoga*, characterised by ecstatic seizures, periods of cerebral exaltation, and alleged divine powers.‡ To the same origin we must attribute the similar phe-

* This was the universal opinion of classical antiquity. See Payne Knight, *Ancient Art*, p. 45. It was also the orthodox theory of the early Church concerning the redeemed soul. It "will know all things as God doth. Whatsoever is in Heaven and whatsoever is in earth, everything will he see with that veritable knowledge which nothing escapeth."—*Select Works of St. Ephrem the Syrian*, translated by Rev. J. B. Morris, p. 353.

† Ridley, in *Jour. Anthrop. Institute*, vol. ii., p. 269.

‡ Mr. A. E. Gough gives reasons for the opinion that the *yogin*, who practises the *yoga*, is a lineal follower of the ancient local shaman. —*Philosophy of the Upanishads*, p. 221.

nomena of "speaking with tongues," and religious mania.

I am not speaking of deceptions or illusions. When I say that all religions depend for their origin and continuance directly upon inspiration, I state an historic fact. It may be known under other names, of credit or discredit, as mysticism, ecstasy, rhapsody, demoniac possession, the divine afflatus, the gnosis, or in its latest christening, "cosmic consciousness." * All are but expressions of a belief that knowledge arises, words are uttered, or actions performed, not through conscious ideation and reflective purpose, but through the promptings of a power above or beyond the individual mind.† Prophets and shamans, evangelists and Indian medicine-men, all claim, and all claim with honesty, to be moved by the god within, the *deus in nobis*, and to speak the words of the Lord.

* This curious recent development of most ancient experience is described by Dr. M. Bucke in the work, *In Re Walt Whitman.*

† The phenomena of "demoniac possession" are so remarkable, and so frequent in lower conditions of culture that they have been defended as the actual influence of evil spirits by intelligent modern observers (see the work of Rev. Dr. Nevins, *Demoniac Possession in China*, etc.). Bishop Calloway says most of the negro converts in Natal have such attacks after embracing Christianity (*Jour. Anthrop. Society*, vol. i., p. 171). Brough Smith describes such attacks among the Australians. Strong men are suddenly seized with violent convulsions. They dance wildly, scream at the top of their voices, foam at the mouth, and continue until utterly exhausted. They are homicidal when in this condition, and their companions fear to approach them (*The Aborigines of Victoria*, vol. i., p. 466).

The intensity of purpose, and the suppression of the reason which everywhere and at all times this sense of inspiration brings with it, cannot be overestimated in their influence on the history of the race. To them are due all fanaticism, religious bigotry, and illiberality.

He who has walked with God, who has felt the pressure of the divine hand, who has been rewarded with the "beatific vision," to him all lesser ties are weak, all knowledge vain. He will say: "It is better to know God and be ignorant of all else, than to know all else and be ignorant of God." No reasoning can convince him of error, for his logic acknowledges not the laws of human thought; no appeal will soften his judgments, for he utters not the decision of a man, but the unalterable edict of the God.

Unless we can offer a rational explanation for this universal trait, all religions become inexplicable. Fortunately the investigations of modern psychology enable us to present such an explanation. It teaches us by innumerable examples that by far the majority of the impressions on our senses leave no trace in conscious recollection, although they are stored in the records of the brain; that what seems lost to memory, still lingers in its recesses; and that mental action is constantly going on and reaching results, wholly without our knowledge.

The psychologist calls this process by the terms "unconscious cerebration," or "psychic automatism." It is the function of the "sub-limital consciousness," or, for short, the "sub-consciousness." Not only is it common, it is constant, and the results of this unperceived labour of our minds is often far more valuable than those of our intelligent efforts. The most complex mechanical inventions, the most impressive art-work of the world, even the most difficult mathematical solutions, have been attained through this unknowing mechanism of mind. They seemed real inspirations, but we may be sure that the mind through long *conscious* effort had been storing the material and laying the foundation for the perfect edifice which sprang so magically into existence.

The psychologist has gone farther. Not resting content with the detection of this automatic mental machinery, he has studied how it is set a-going, and is prepared to show that in all its forms it can be produced at will under favourable conditions. Like an ancient necromancer, he can inspire and bewitch, he can exorcise demons and cast out devils.

His power is not occult, for it belongs to science, and science has no secrets. It is known as "suggestion," and in it lies the sociologic power of all religions and superstitions whatever, primitive or

present. It is necessary, therefore, that I devote a few words to its explanation.

Suggestion in its simplest form is the indirect evocation of an idea in the mind as the starting-point of a process of thought and feeling. The idea may be impressed by a repetition of the stimulus, by association with allied ideas, or by sensory contacts. It may be evoked by deliberate effort of our own, which is called "auto-suggestion"; or the impression may be derived from or directed to a number of individuals, which is termed "collective suggestion."

Powerful means of suggestion are the monotonous repetitions of certain words; the fixation of the sight on a single object; the concentration of the mind on one thought; the reduction of the ordinary nutrition; association with persons already under its influence; continuance of the same motions; prolonged hearing the same note or rhythmic chord; silence, darkness, and solitude. These may be variously combined and brought to bear upon the mind in such a manner as entirely to alter its ordinary habits, and seemingly to evoke another personality.

The rationale by which this is reached is through developing the automatic and unconscious action of the mind into a conscious display of its powers.

This may be repulsive or admirable, above or below the normal capacities; but is always correlated to the individual, and connected with his experiences.

This is the explanation of nearly all the religious experiences of primitive peoples, as it is of what is known as "theopathy" everywhere, and of the modern forms of theosophy, mesmerism, and hypnotism.*

All religious teachings and associations, in the lowest as well as the highest faiths, aim to cultivate these mystical feelings by increasing the intensity of the suggestions which give rise to them, and diminishing the force of other suggestions which may interfere.

Even in civilised communities it is extraordinary with what facility suggestive sense-delusions can be produced in waking persons. At least ninety out of every hundred individuals can be persuaded thus to deceive themselves. The extreme contagiousness of such delusions, common enough in civilised conditions, is greatly increased in the savage state. In their lives the phenomena of auto-suggestion are strikingly frequent. Among the African Zulus any adult can cast himself or herself into the hypnotic

* The most complete study of this subject in connection with the development of religions is the work of Dr. Otto Stoll, *Suggestion und Hypnotismus in der Völkerpsychologie* (Leipzig, 1894).

state, and by this obtain what they consider second sight,—"the power to see where lost objects are, and how absent friends are occupied." When asked to explain this state of mind, they can only say that it is one "in which a man is awake, but sees things which he would not see, if he were not in this state"*; which reminds us of the remarkable doctrine of the Sanscrit Upanishads—"There is no limit to the knowing of the Self that knows."† Among many Australian tribes, among the Kamschatkans, and among the Yahgans of Tierra del Fuego, as well as many other peoples, the mysterious power of the shamans or medicine men is shared by all adults in a greater or less degree.‡

These are at the bottom of the scale. One degree higher, and we find the priesthood a separate class, usually of both sexes, but chosen by natural selection from those members of the community who by temperament or cultivation possess in the highest degree this tendency to mystical power. This

* Bishop Calloway, in *Jour. Anthrop. Institute*, i., p. 177; and in his *Religious System of the Amazulu*, p. 232. The Bushmen explain it as "a kind of beating of the flesh," which tells them the future, and where lost things may be found. They add: "Those who are stupid do not understand this teaching."—Bleek, *Bushman Folk-lore*, p. 17.

† A. E. Gough, *Philosophy of the Upanishads*, p. 243.

‡ Klemm, *Allgemeine Culturgeschichte*, Bd. ii., s. 337; A. M. Curr, *The Australian Race*, vol. i., p. 48.

is generally indicated by the clearness and character of the dreams and visions which appear at the time he or she enters adult life. These are considered to be direct inspirations from the spirit world, either from the souls of the dead, or the powers other than those which control the destiny of man.

These inspired seers represent the priesthood of every primitive religion. They cultivate and preserve it, and in them the missionaries of higher faiths have ever found their most resolute foes and successful opponents. The reason is, as I have said, that the shaman has himself been face to face with God, has heard His voice, and felt His presence. His faith therefore is real, and cannot be shaken by any argument. He may indeed, and he generally does, assist his public performances with some trickery, some thaumaturgy; but that this is merely superadded for effect is proved by the general custom that when one such adept is ill or in straits he will solicit the aid of another. *

Among his associates he is looked upon as set apart from other men by the divinity which chooses him for its agent, or dwells within him. In the Polynesian islands this is forcibly expressed in the

* Curr notes this among the Australians, *ubi supra*, vol. i., p. 48; and it is general among American Indians.

terms applied to the native priests, *pia atua*, "god boxes," receptacles of divinity; and *amama*, "open mouths," for through them the god speaks, not their own selves.*

The presence of divinity is recognised and felt only in unusual mental states, in moments of ecstasy or trance, in periods of rapture, intoxication, or frenzy. Hence in all early and many late religions abnormal and pathological mental seizures are regarded as cases of inspiration, or else of demoniac possession. In the Quichua language of Peru the word *huaca* is their most general term for the divine, but *huaca runa*, "divine man," means one who is crazy†; and in Greek, the word *mania* was used for both madness and prophetic inspiration.

We thus see that in this mental state we find the psychic development of the primitive idea of the divine, the notion of God. It is not, as has sometimes been claimed, the sudden result of a single feeling; it is a complex conception, from a multitude of obscurely felt impressions and emotions. It is neither an intuition nor an induction; it is neither an inference from observation, nor the conclusion of a logical process. A study of its aspect in savage life shows that it arises from the perception of the

* W. W. Gill, *Myths and Songs from the South Pacific*, p. 35.
† Middendorf, *Keshua Wörterbuch*, s. v.

latent activity of the sub-consciousness, from the strange sense of activity, will, and power which, under favourable conditions of concentration (suggestion), it imparts to the more or less conscious Self. This influence is at first vague, impersonal, undefined, but is gradually differentiated and personified. Furthermore, it is constantly strengthened and sustained by the agency of that cultivated suggestion I have described, which is intended to bring the individual into contact with unknown activities. Thus the idea of the superhuman is developed from the unconscious human powers of Mind.

Conclusive evidence of this is offered by language. From the abundant material at hand let us choose three examples, widely separated, one from the Dakotan stock of North American Indians, one from the ancient Peruvians, and one from the South Sea Islanders.

The hidden and mysterious power of the universe is expressed in the Dakotan dialects by the word *wakan*. This term expresses infinite will; it is, as Miss Fletcher tells us, "the deification of that peculiar quality or power of which man is conscious within himself as directing his own acts or willing a course to bring about certain results." From the word *wacin*, will, are derived the terms for what we call "telepathy," a belief in which is nigh universal

in primitive cults; for intelligence or mentality; and for the sacred dance.*

While the meaning of *wakan* in Dakota is well defined, its derivation is uncertain. It is singular that precisely the same word with the same meaning reappears in the Quichua and Aymara languages of the interior of Peru. It is there applied to everything which is extraordinary or immense, out of the course of nature, and especially to everything sacred or divine. It was not a deity, but expressed the deific power believed to be present in men, animals, or things. †

The identity of the two words is probably no mere coincidence, nor is the one borrowed from the other. In Quichua *wakan* expresses the sound characteristic of any animal, as *allco wakan*, the dog howls, *huallpa wakan* the cock crows, and this in turn is derived from the interjection of surprise or astonishment or admiration, *hua*. It was that which was employed in the sacred invocations.

Strange as it may seem, the English word "God" is traced by Aryan scholars through the Gothic *guth* to the Sanscrit verb *hua* to call upon, to invoke (past participle, *hutha*), the same primitive interjection in

* *Proceedings of the American Association for the Advancement of Science*, 1896. Sect. H.

† On the meaning of *huaca* see von Tschudi, *Beiträge zur Kennt. des alten Peru*, p. 156; Bertonio, *Vocab. de la Lengua Aymara*, s. v.

verbal form; and the holy name of the Hebrews, *Yahve*, is now believed to be that of the Chaldean god of the earth, waters, and fertility, in whose name *Eā*, *Ya*, or *Yah*, we recognize a cognate interjection or refrain, the same which, shouted in the orgiastic rites, gave the name, Bacchus or Iachus.[1]

Turning to the island world of the Pacific we find through its countless groups of sunny isles the impersonal Divine expressed by one general term, *mana*. The natives believed in the agency of departed souls and also of spirits of independent origin (*vui*); but the supernatural power through which both acted on nature or events was this *mana*. If a man prospered in his affairs and gained influence in the tribe, it was not by his own efforts, but because he had *mana*; precisely as pious persons among ourselves attribute their prosperity and that of their worthy neighbors to the favour of the Lord. The original meaning of

*The probable identity of Heb. *Iah* with Chald. *Iah* is acknowledged by Pinches, Sayce, and other eminent Assyriologists (see an article by the former, in the *Proc.* of the Victorian Institute for 1895). That the Greek Iachus is from the Chaldeo-Syrian (as his myth claims, referring to him as "The Assyrian stranger," etc., L. Dyer *The Gods in Greece*, p. 165) was maintained by Herodotus, Macrobius, and Plutarch, among the ancients, and by various modern authors. It can be shown, however, that *Yah* as a name of God was derived from a sacred interjection or cry of the same phonetic value, which recurs repeatedly in the cults of America, Polynesia, and Australia. This is also true of *hua* or *wa*, the radical of the English "God." They are both what have been called "universal" radicals.

mana appears to be "that which is within one," and, later, the intelligence on mind, whence power or might, as the expressions of Will applied to the concept of universal life and motion.*

These words, I repeat, do not convey any idea of personality. They are not evidences of a primitive monotheism, as has often been claimed. They, and all like them, are vague, indefinite terms for the supernatural, that which was inexplicable by the limited knowledge of the most ignorant of our species. †

The media of suggestion act primarily through the emotions, and in the religious suggestion those emotions especially are concerned which give rise to thoughts concerning the super-sensuous and the manifestation of power.

But none of these emotions in itself, neither fear,

* Codrington in *Jour. Anthrop. Inst.*, vol. x., p. 279; Fornander, *The Polynesian Race*, vol. iii., pp. 225–7. In some dialects *mana* has the special meanings, omen; the thunder; the breath; the belly (*i. e.*, the interior), etc. Hale gives the definition "power" as common to all dialects (*Polynesian Lexicon*, s. v.). Fornander notes the similarity to Sanscrit, *mana*, *manu*, mind, thought.

† I have dwelt on the absence of monotheism among the American tribes in *Myths of the New World*, p. 75. Dr. Washington Matthews, a most competent, authority, expresses the universally correct view, when, speaking of Mahopa, the divine conception of the Hidatsa Indians, he says: "It refers to an influence or power above all things, but not attaching to it any ideas of personality."—*Ethnography of the Hidatsa Indians*, p. 48.

hope, awe, wonder, nor any other, has the power to evoke the notion of the supernatural. It arises from those deeper intellectual traits which are peculiarly human.

Yet it is true that such emotions are potent stimuli to those forms of suggestion which lead up to the religious feelings; they are part of them, and what arouses and incites those, develops and strengthens these; and they thus have their place as suggestive accessories.

To the savage, all nature testifies to the presence of the mysterious power which is behind its forms and motions. He sees the Divine everywhere. But from this multitude of impressions which excited him to religious thought we may separate a limited number as beyond others potent and universal. These are special stimuli to the religious emotions. They are five in number:

1. Dreaming and allied conditions.

2. The apprehension of Life and Death, from which arises the notion of the Soul.

3. The perception of Light and Darkness.

4. The observation of Extraordinary Exhibitions of Force.

5. The impression of Vastness.

1. A line of Lucretius asserts that "the dreams of men peopled the heaven with gods." We have a

right to reply that if dreams alone give us the gods, why are they absent from the lives of dogs, who are vivid dreamers?

Certain it is, however, that among all savage tribes dreams are regarded as a part of the experience of life. To primitive man, they are real: he sees and hears in them as he does in his waking hours; he does not distinguish between the subjective creation of his brain cells and objective existence.

In what they differ from daily life, they are divine. They reveal the future and summon the absent. The Kamschatkans, we are told, gather together every morning to narrate their dreams and to guess at their interpretation. Of the Eskimos it is stated that their daily lives "are to a great extent guided by their dreams." The Bororo of Brazil take a dream so literally that a whole village will decamp and seek a distant site, if one dreams of the approach of an enemy.*

The physiological character of dreams easily explains the superstitious attention they have received in all ages and nations. The absence of external impressions during sleep favours the rise of unconscious

* Klemm, *Culturgeschichte*, Bd. ii., s. 338; L. M. Turner, *The Hudson Bay Eskimos*, p. 272; von den Steinen, *Die Naturvölker Zentral-Brasiliens*, p. 340. Among the Australians, both men and women become "doctors" or shamans by dreaming.—Curr, *The Australian Race*, vol., ii., p. 74.

mental action into consciousness. In them memory is often more active than while waking; our personality seems doubled, because it has no longer the will to react against the throngs of varied impressions which arise. The emotions in sleep are excitable, and both fear and joy are often more intense than when awake. Add to this that many persons, especially those of nervous temperament, are subject to peculiarly vivid illusions during the moments between waking and sleeping, which seem to belong as much to the former as to the latter conditions,* and we have reasons enough for the part they play in primitive religions.

There are reasons for believing that the dreams of ruder races are more vivid than our own, more like pictures and realities.† They certainly do not draw the line so sharply between the sights and sounds of sleeping and waking as we do. With wide-open eyes they see spectres and apparitions, such as are not unknown, but are ever growing scarcer, in civilised lands. These waking visions are assiduously cultivated, and become, as I have already said, the chief bond between man and divinity. ‡

* These are called "hypnogogic hallucinations." They have been studied by Maury, *Annales Medico-psychologiques*, tome xi., p. 252, *sq.*

† This point is discussed by Professor Granger, *Worship of the Romans*, pp. 28, *sq.*

‡ Bishop Calloway describes the regimen adopted to become in-

Not only by fasting, solitude, and intense expectation centred on the expected revelation, is it brought into reality, but in nearly every savage tribe we find a knowledge of narcotic plants which were employed to induce strange and vivid hallucinations or dreams. The negroes of the Niger had their "fetish water," the Creek Indians of Florida their "black drink," for this purpose. In many parts of the United States the natives smoked stramonium, the Mexican tribes swallowed the *peyotl* and the snake-plant, the tribes of California and the Samoyeds of Siberia had found a poisonous toadstool; —all to bring about communion with the Divine and to induce ecstatic visions.* Whatever the means employed, their aim was everywhere the same, and was directed primarily and essentially towards the excitation of the religious emotions, towards securing a revelation of the will of the gods.

Thus it came that the whole of life, waking and sleeping, assumed a dreamy, unreal character. The traveller Spix says of the forest tribes of Brazil that they never seem fully awake; and a Pawnee

spired among the Zulus, in *Jour. Anthrop. Soc.*, vol. i., p. 175. Among the Dyaks of Borneo the ceremony is called *nampok*, and its conditions are: 1. To be alone; 2. To pass the night on a mountain top; 3. To offer a sacrifice and call for the god. Ling Roth, *Natives of Sarawak*, vol. i., p. 185.

* I have treated this question at some length in my *Myths of the New World*, p. 314, and *Nagualism*, p. 7, *sq.*

war song begins by an appeal to the gods to decide if this life itself is aught but a dream.*

The ancient Mexicans had developed the doctrine that this life is a dream and that death is the awakening, the passing into a living condition. They spoke of dying as the appearance of the dawn, and the approach of light. This is closely akin to that doctrine of *mâyâ*, or the unreality of the duality of the subject and object, which "is the very life of the primitive [East] Indian philosophy." †

The influence which such a view must have exerted on the religious thought of a nation is manifest.

2. The question has been discussed by some philosophers whether the idea of Life is anterior in the human mind to that of Death. Had they studied the beliefs of primitive peoples, their doubts would have disappeared. The savage knows not death as a natural occurrence. His language has no word meaning "to die," but only "to be killed." Disease is an unseen shaft, or the work of a malignant sorcerer. To him, all things live and live forever. Each bird, each bush, each rock has its

* I have given a translation of it in *Essays of an Americanist*, p. 293.

† A. E. Gough, *Philosophy of the Upanishads*, p. 237. The Mexican adjurations referred to are given by Sahagun, *Historia de Nueva España*, lib. x., cap. 29.

own vital principle. By reason of the consciousness of his own living Self, he imputes life to all around him, but in a higher degree and of some rarer quality to those existences which he holds as his deities. His god is supremely a living god, the source of Life, its creator, preserver, and sustainer.

If we seek the recondite meaning hidden behind the two words which throughout Polynesia expressed in its most general sense the concept of the Divine, *io*, and *atua*, we discover that it is in both "the central cause or essentiality of Life."* So among the Indians of Michoacan the epithet of the chief goddess of their cult was, "The Sustainer of Life"; the highest divinity of the Aztecs was Tonacatecutli, "God of Our Life"; and in the Muskoghean tribes His name was "The Master of Life."

So full, I say, was the mind of primitive man with the vision of universal and immortal life, that to him there was no such thing as death. The fact, indeed, remained. The tree was shrivelled by the lightning, the brute fell by the arrow, man himself gasped his last breath and lay an inert mass. The loved child, the warrior hero, passed out of sight to the unseen beyond.

But not forever! No! They hovered around the

* W. W. Gill, *Myths and Songs of the South Pacific*, pp. 28, 34. The concrete meaning of both words is pith, kernel, core, centre, etc.

familiar spot, they visited the living in dreams, their voices were heard in the rustling leaves and the falling waters. Not only men, but all things lived again. In the mythology of the Vitians there is a heaven even for cocoanuts! To the Kamschatkans the smallest flies have souls which are immortal.*

This is the doctrine of souls, the source of those innumerable beliefs and rites which are centred around the sepulchre, so solemn, so profoundly significant, that many writers have maintained that "religion began, when the living thought seriously of the dead"; that "all religions have crystallised around the tomb"; and that in the propitiation of departed souls, in the worship of the spirits of ancestors, and in the preparation in this life for another beyond the grave, the whole aim and essence of religion are embraced.†

I have already said that this is a hasty assertion, for there are religions which recognise a soul scarcely or at all; but they are not of a primitive character.‡

* Hale, *Ethnography of the U.S. Exploring Expedition*, p. 55; Klemm, *Culturgeschichte*, Bd. ii., s. 315; after Stoll. The Algonkian myth relates that the hero-god Nanabojou could converse with the spirits of all things, with trees, flowers, butterflies, the thunder, etc. (Clark, *Indian Sign Language*, p. 113).

† Elysée Reclus, *Le Primitif d'Australie*, p. 232.

‡ The Greeks had but vague notions of an after life, and Professor Schrader remarks: "The cult of the dead has no place in the

In the latter, some such belief is universally shown either by the treatment of the corpse, or the modes of mourning for the dead, or by myths concerning the life and actions of the departed.

It is generally held that the soul is multiple, two, three, or four being assigned to a person. One or more of these may perish with the body, or shortly afterwards; but one at least survives indefinitely, and concerns itself with the doings of those it has left behind in life. Its powers for good and evil are increased by its translation to another sphere of existence; and to secure its assistance, or at least its neutrality, is the aim of that cult of the departed souls and of the spirits of ancestors which is so widely defined in primitive conditions.

They are not identical, and we find in many tribes much attention paid to conciliating the souls of the dead where ancestor worship is unknown. In fact, the former is the older and more general observance. The aim is to get rid of the soul, to put it to rest or send it on its journey to a better land, otherwise it will annoy the survivors.*

Homeric world." *Prehist. Antiqs. of the Aryan Peoples*, p. 424. The "indigetes dii" of the Romans were rather heroes than divinities, though Arnobius, *Adv. Gentes*, lib. i., cap. 64, asserts that they were worshipped.

* The most satisfactory recent study on the worship of ancestors and of the dead, is that by Dr. S. R. Steinmetz in his *Ethnologische Studien zur ersten Entwicklung der Strafe*, Bd. i., ss. 141–287 (Leiden, 1894).

In many primitive tribes, therefore, there is little fear of death. The soul leaves the body in sleep to wander over the earth, and the only difference of death is that it does not return in time. More than this, the soul of the living can visit the realms of the dead. The Comanches knew of men who had spent two days looking at the white tents of the encampment of souls far west under the setting sun; and the Zuñi mothers who had lost their little darlings are reconciled by being cast into a deep sleep, during which they go and see them in the mystic world beyond. So also believe the Australians and numberless other tribes.*

We need not look for any definiteness of statement as to what the soul is. In many tribes the word for it is akin to that for breath, as in our own expression, "the breath of life." Frequently it is identified with the shadow, as among the Zulus of Africa, and the Eskimos, Algonquins, and Quiches of America. Others, as the Mincopies (Andaman Islands), think they see it in the reflection of the body in still water

* Clark, *Indian Sign Language*, pp. 121, 165, 199, 207, etc.; Howitt in *Jour. Anthrop. Institute*, vol. xiii., p. 186. If one wakes a sleeper suddenly, he may die, as his vagrant soul may not get back in time. Von den Steinen, *Naturvölker Zentral-Brasiliens*, p. 510. In all these primitive views the real soul is regarded as merely a tenant of the body (not a function or the result of functions), as it is to-day in the popular religions of civilised lands.

or a mirror. The Australians assert that it is a mist, fog, or smoke, etc.

These ideas are, of course, material. They impute to the soul similar wants to that of the corporeal man. It desires a dwelling, needs food, takes visible forms, and the like; but also it is endowed with faculties transcending those it possessed in the flesh, and these may be directed to the benefit or the injury of the survivors. Therefore its wants should be gratified, and its temper conciliated by offerings and appropriate funeral rites.*

3. I turn now to a perception of the primitive man, a contrast of impressions on his senses, more potent, I believe, than even the immeasurable one of Life and Death. It is Light and Darkness. This universal, ever recurring change in nature controlled all his actions, and reacted as a powerful stimulus on his religious emotions. I could almost be willing

* The fear of ghosts in civilised countries is the survival of a widespread, ancient belief in the malevolence of souls. I have found no instance of this more striking than among the Finns. They believed that the souls of the dead lie in wait for the living, in order to kill and eat them, especially their hearts and lungs, so that the slain could not live again. The ghosts did not spare their nearest relatives, and the story is told of an old man, who warned his beloved young wife not to follow his corpse to the grave, or his ghost would eat her. She disobeyed, and saved herself only by pronouncing the name of God. *Cong. Internat. d'Archéologie de Moscou*, Tom. ii., p. 316. In about one third of known savage tribes, the ghosts are considered kind and friendly to the survivors. See Steinmetz's analysis in his *Entwicklung der Strafe*, Bd. i., s. 142, *sq.*

to subscribe to the expression of a German writer that "the adoration of Light was the foundation of all religion."* The rude litanies of paganism all over the world seem to join in the solemn chant of the Evangelist—"God is Light, and in Him is no darkness at all."

We may begin with the Australian Blacks, who averred the supreme divinity lives in *keladi*, eternal brightness, up above the sky. His name is *Baiame*, meaning "the maker" or "the cutter out," as one cuts out patterns from a skin. He sees and knows all things.†

Through most of Polynesia, the chief deity was Ka-ne, which means sunlight, the opposite of darkness, and is allied to the verb *kanea*, to see. Another name for Ka-ne is Tangaloa, the lord of light. The colour red is sacred to him, he was portrayed with long blond hair, and children who had light hair or were albinos were deemed his progeny. When the fair-skinned Europeans first landed on the islands they were called the "children of Tangaloa."‡

* Friedrich Freihold, *Die Lebensgeschichte der Menschheit*, Bd. i., s. 35.

† Baiame is from the verb *bhai*. *Jour. Anthrop. Institute*, vol. viii., p. 242. The "Nurali" of the Murray River tribes is also an embodiment of light. B. B. Smyth, *Aborigines of Victoria*, vol. i., p. 423.

‡ Gill, *Myths and Songs*, p. 13; Fornander, *The Polynesian Race*, vol. iii., p. 153.

Sometimes the myths represent Tangaloa as the son of Vatea (Avatea, Wakea), "noon" or "noon-day." He was father of gods and man, half man, half fish, to typify land and water, and it was said of him that his right eye was the sun, his left the moon. So far removed was he that no worship was ever paid him, and no representation made of him.*

If we turn to the extremely savage inhabitants of the Andaman Islands, a remnant of the ancient, almost pygmy, black race of Southern Asia, we find that their supreme being is Puluga, the creator of all things, who was never born and will never die. He is invisible, but of the nature of light; he lives in the sky, and placed there the sun and moon. He is omniscient, but only while it is day, when he can see.†

As the red rays of the morning and evening light caused in Polynesia all things red to be sacred to Tangaloa, so among the Hottentots of South Africa their supreme being was named Tsuni Goab, the red light of the Dawn, who in mythology stood in opposition to Gaunah, the Dark Sky.‡

This worship of light has several constant associations in religious thought which find expression in the myth and cult.

*Gill, *ubi supra*, pp. 3, 17, 44.

†E. W. Man, in *Jour. Anthrop. Institute*, vol. xii., p. 166.

‡Th. Hahn, *Tsuni ǁGoam*, pp. 124, 126.

In nature, light is a potent stimulus of organic growth, and this fact, obscurely apprehended by the primitive mind, led to the equivalence of Light and Life. Light as the vital principle recurs in most mythologies. As we obtain light artificially from fire, whose general warmth also is akin to that of the living as contrasted to the dead body, the soul or living element was allied to flame. In ancient German mythology the soul was called a torch or taper (J. Grimm), and in the beliefs of the Polynesians and American Indians the ghosts of the dead usually appear as luminous masses.* All will remember the words of Othello—

"Put out the light, and then,—put out the light!"

A second association of light was with the sky, in day the home of the bright sun, at night where glitter a thousand points of brilliancy.

In most mythologies the sky is supposed to be a solid, shining arch or dome which covers the earth like a roof. Upon it, out of sight to mortal eyes, live the gods. It constitutes the "Hill of Heaven," the celestial mountain upon which are the homes of the divine beings. So it is oft likened to some known terrestial elevation, as in Greek mythology,

* Clark, *Indian Sign Language*, p. 186; *Jour. Anthrop. Institute*, vol. x., p. 285.

Mt. Olympus, and in that of India, Mt. Meru. Such sacred hills are mentioned by most of the American tribes.* In Polynesian myth it was "the blue mountain, the land of the divine water," a fluid of such vital virtue that were even a dead man sprinkled with it he would come to life. On the island of Mangaia a certain hill was pointed out which in old times propped up the sky.†

The Tehuelches of Patagonia relate that the Creator first moulded men and all animals on the "Hill of God" and then set them loose to people the earth. The natives of Southern Borneo assign to their supreme divinity Atala a home in the highest heaven, on the shore of the "celestial lake, moved by the Moon and surrounding the Sun." Homi, the high heaven, is the deity of the Hottentots, who pours the rains, blows the wind, and sends heat and cold on earth.‡

Thus it is that everywhere the Sky God is also the High God. This blending of the ideas of life and light with the sky led to another and obvious association which has left its mark on every religion, primitive or developed. The sky is, in direction,

* *Myths of the New World*, pp. 97, 165, etc.

† Fornander, *Polynesian Race*, vol. i., p. 78; Gill, *Myths and Songs*, p. 18.

‡ Musters, *Among the Patagonians*, ch. v.; Ling Roth, *Natives of Sarawak*, vol. ii., App., p. clxx.; Hahn, *Tsuni ‖ Goam*, p. 37.

above us. The god of the sky is therefore the god on high. He is the one who dwells above, our lord in the heaven.

This he is in all mythologies. Among the Indians of the plains he is (or, It is) "the great medicine *above*," and in the sign language, to indicate this, when the sign is made for "medicine" (mystery) the finger is pointed to the zenith.* The Puluga of the Andamanese "lives in the sky." Tangaloa is addressed as "He above in the heavens"; the Finnish Ukko is also called "The Navel of the Sky," and so on. †

Examples are innumerable. But what need of collecting them? Do we not ourselves constantly use the adjective the *Supreme* Being, for God, which means simply the highest being? And did not the founder of our religion forbid his followers to swear by the sky, giving as the reason that it was the throne of God, who sitteth upon it? ‡

This idea runs through the whole of his teachings. In the Gospel of Matthew the same term, οὐρανιος, or, ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοις as a descriptive term of divinity,

* Clark, *Indian Sign Language*, p. 189.

† Castren observes: "Es hat innerhalb der weitgestreckten Gränzen Asiens kaum ein einziges Volk gegeben, welches nicht den Himmel verehrt hätte."—*Finnische Mythologie*, p. 14. He might as well have said, "the habitable globe" instead of Asia only.

‡ Matthew, v., 34.

is applied not less than eighty-eight times ; and in the first clause of the Lord's Prayer, it is to " Our Father in the Skies," that the invocation is addressed.

Strange that this very word *οὐρανός*, in Sanscrit Uaruna, is that which, in the primitive religion of the Aryan peoples, was applied to the most exalted of their gods, to him " whose realm is above us," " the very strong," " the shining one," " the king of sky and earth," " creator of all, the earth-enveloping sky." *

What more striking evidence do we wish of the indissoluble unity of religious thought, no matter what its stage of development, in all centuries and all races ?

In the Polynesian mythology, Tangaloa, the bright daylight, has as his brother, Rongo, the god of darkness and night. Tangaloa is fair-haired and light in hue, Rongo is black in hair and skin. Tangaloa is beneficent, the dispenser of good, and inventor of the arts of peace ; Rongo is the fomenter of strife, the god of war and author of bloodshed. In accordance with these, all the gods were classed in two orders, " dwellers in day," and " dwellers in night." †

The contrast which is here presented prevails throughout early cults. The night, when man, de-

* Hopkins, *Religions of India*, pp. 62, *seq.*

† Gill, *ubi supra*, pp. 10–14 ; Sir George Grey, *Polynesian Mythology*, ch. i.

prived of light and sight, becomes the prey of stealthy beasts, was everywhere considered the time when the unseen powers of destruction are let loose and the malevolent agencies of the spirit-world run riot.

This is one of the most primitive of religious beliefs and is discovered in the rudest tribes. The Yahgans of Tierra del Fuego say that the invisible spirits go about at night; the Australian tribes everywhere manifested a deep dread of the darkness, not like the unconscious shuddering of a child on entering a dark room, but because they believed spirits walked in the gloom seeking whom they could devour. It is then, said they, that Cuchi (Kootche) goes forth, either in the form of a snake or some nocturnal bird. He it is who causes sickness among men. The thunder is the growl of his anger, the whirlwinds his breath, and the aurora australis the fitful light of his camp fire.*

Associated with the gloom of night, was the darkness of the storm, which in many mythologies is contrasted with the sunshine in some divine struggle. Endless are the tales and rites which bear upon this contest in early religions. Indeed, according to some, they are the chief staple of all mythologies.†

* B. Brough Smith, *Aborigenes of Victoria*, vol. i., p. 457.

† Notably by Prof. F. L. W. Schwartz in his numerous works, and in his contributions to the *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, etc.

4. I have already mentioned that the idea of Power is one of the first to be connected with deity. The god is one who can do more than man. Especially any sudden and striking display of force, either in the material or immaterial world, stimulates the religious sense. The historian Buckle claimed that the inhabitants of countries subject to earthquakes are peculiarly superstitious. In myths and names, the hurricane of the tropics, the storm-winds of higher latitudes, indeed all sudden and tremendous outbreaks of natural violence, are regarded as exhibitions of divine Power.

Notably is this the case with the thunder storm. That manifestation of tremendous power has excited the religious feelings of all races. Moreover, the highly charged electrical atmosphere exerts a special influence on the nervous system, predisposing it to emotional outbreaks. The roll and reverberation of the thunder, the zigzag flash and destructive blow of the lightning and the roar of the tempest, combine to present the phenomenon as a manifest display of supernatural power. Hence in innumerable tribes the thunder god was identified with, or was the peer of, the highest in the Pantheon.* The same is true

* The Hebrew name Jahve (Jehovah) is derived by some from the verb "to thunder." In the Vedas, Parjanja, the Thunderer, is a conspicuous figure. Mumpal, the Thunder, say the Australians, created all things. (*Reise der Fregatte Novara*, Anthrop. Theil, s.

of potent and coercive mental traits. Their possessors are regarded as partaking of the deific being to a greater extent than others, or even actually divine. It is not merely that they excite the emotion of fear. That is a shallow interpretation of the psychic process. Underlying it is the deeper suggestion of energy, of action, of the spiritual mastery of material existence. This is as real, though not so clear, in the mind of the savage as in that of the philosopher.

This is also seen in the names and titles applied to the concept of Divinity by all nations. They speak of God "All-mighty," the "Omnipotent Ruler"; and ever the attribute of indefinite power belongs to the great gods.

In early religions the manifestations of power are personified as single deities. We thus find in native American myths the figures of Huracan, the hurricane; Huemac, the Strong Hand, god of earthquakes, and numberless thunder, lightning, and storm gods.

5. It has been remarked by a German historian that the richest development of early poetry has been found among tribes dwelling by the ocean or among mountains; and another writer has claimed that the most rapid development of religions has

ix.) Among the Bechuanas, "When it thunders, every one trembles, and each asks the other, 'Is there anyone among us who has devoured the wealth of others?'" (Calloway, *Relig. System of the Amazulu*, p. 117). Any number of other examples could be added.

taken place where the broad expanses of deserts or seas have stimulated the mind to contemplation of spacial magnitude on earth and in the sky.*

The languages of primitive peoples bear traces of this. In the Aztec tongue any wide level prairie is called *teotlalli*, godland; and the ocean, *teoatl*, god-water; among the Peruvians the term *huaca*, holy, is synonymous with "vast" or "immense." With the Polynesians *taula*, the ocean space, is the home of the gods and where the souls go at death. The traveller Castren once stood on the shore of the Arctic Ocean with a Samoyed. Turning to the native, he asked, "where is Num?" (their chief god). "There," instantly replied the Samoyed, waving his hand toward where "loomed the dark broad sea."†

In many cults this idea is attempted expression by assigning to deities hugeness of size. The colossal stone images of Easter Island, the huge statues of the Maoris, are endeavours to present it to the senses.

In more developed faiths the same tendency prevails. The Buddhists rival each other in constructing enormous statues of Sakya Muni; in the Sanscrit Upanishads, Aditi, who represents the endless visible expanse, is termed "mother and father of all gods

* Klemm, *Culturgeschichte*, Bd. i., s. 64; Honegger, *Culturgeschichte*, Bd. i., s. 332.

† Castren, *Finnische Mythologie*, p. 17.

and men, the substance of whatever has been or shall be born" *; and according to some Mahommedan writers, God is so great that it is 72,000 days' journey between his eyes!

Such are some of the potent stimuli which stir the depths of man's psychical nature, awakening in him the belief in unknown powers far beyond his ability to measure or to cope with. Not from any conscious act of intelligence, not from any process of voluntary reasoning, is that belief born, but from the unknown, the unplumbed abyss of the sub-conscious mind.

Let not this be considered as something degrading to the religious conceptions themselves. Though all are drawn from out the human spirit itself, and are nowise the direct revelations their believers think them, yet who dare measure the height and the depth of the sub-conscious intelligence? It draws its knowledge from sources which elude scientific research, from the strange powers which we perceive in insects and other lower animals, almost, but not wholly, obliterated in the human line of organic descent; and from others, now merely nascent or embryonic, new senses, destined in some far off æon to endow our posterity with faculties as wondrous to us as would be sight to the sightless.

* Gough, *Philosophy of the Upanishads*, p. 17.

More than this: the teachings of the severest science tell us that Matter is, in its last analysis, Motion, and that motion is nought else than Mind*; and who dare deny that in their unconscious functions our minds may catch some overtones, as it were, from the harmonies of the Universal Intelligence thus demonstrated by inductive research, and vibrate in unison therewith?

*I refer especially to the results of the physical investigations of Helmholtz, and to their logical application to mental science, by George J. Romanes, in his *Mind and Motion;* to the position of Prof. Paulsen in his *Introduction to Philosophy;* and to such lines of thought as are presented in Professor Dolbear's *Matter, Ether, and Motion.*

LECTURE III.

Primitive Religious Expression: in the Word.

CONTENTS :—An Echo Myth—The Power of Words—Their Magical Potency—The Curse—Power Independent of Meaning—The Name as an Attribute—The Sacred Names—The Ineffable Name—"Myrionomous" Gods—"Theophorous" Names—Suggestion and Repetition as Stimulants—I. The Word *to* the gods: Prayer—Its Forms, Contents, and Aims—II. The Word *from* the gods: The Law and the Prophecy—The Ceremonial Law, or *tabu*—Examples—Divination and Prediction—III. The Word *concerning* the gods: The Myths—Their Sources chiefly Psychic—Some from Language—Examples—Transference—Similarities—The Universal Mythical Cycles: 1. The Cosmical Concepts; 2. The Sacred Numbers; 3. The Drama of the Universe; Creation and Deluge Myths; 4. The Earthly Paradise; 5. The Conflict of Nature; 6. The Returning Saviour; 7. The Journey of the Soul—Conclusion as to these Identities.

THERE is a pleasant myth told by the inhabitants of the island of Mangaia in the South Pacific. When the Creator of all things had ordered the solid land to rise from the primeval waters, he walked abroad to survey his work. "It is good," said he aloud to himself. "Good," answered an echo from a neighbouring hill. "What!" exclaimed the Creator. "Is some one here already? Am not I first?" "I first," answered the echo. Therefore

the Mangaians assert that earliest of all existences is the bodiless Voice.* It is their way of saying, "In the beginning was the Word."

Not only may we call it the first, it is also the mightiest of the unseen agencies which mould man and his destinies.

"Power over men," remarks Count Tolstoï in one of his essays, "lies not in material force, but in thought and its clear expression." Disraeli, that subtlest of diplomats, once said, "We govern men with—words."

No idea can be clearly conveyed to another unless there is a word to express it. Inward thought and outward utterance are the correlated conditions of intelligent advancement. The spoken word evokes in the mind of the hearer the picture, the emotion, the reasoning, which is occupying our own. A thousand minds are brought instantly to bear on the same thought by the words in the mouth of one. I cannot place too high the instant and magical effect of the word.

Not only does it convey a new thought to the mind, but it is itself the begetter of thought. It is a

* Related in Gill's *Myths and Songs of the South Pacific*. M. van Ende, in his *Histoire Naturelle de la Croyance*, p. 83, *sq.*, has some suggestive remarks on sound as regarded by primitive nations as a mark of life. Hence, their myths of brooks, trees, etc., as conscious beings.

seed sown, which grows and branches, bearing flower and fruit, beauteous and everlasting, or noxious and destructive.

Through the faculty of speech, social life becomes possible; on it depends the sweet interchange of souls; by it we are led to think in unison; through it we share the meditations of the philosopher, and the inspired visions of the poet and the prophet.

If there is any way in which the spirits of the sky and air, the hosts of the Divine, can touch and teach our souls, it must be chiefly through the spoken word.

Every religion of the world bears witness to this. There is no other element in them in which all join with like unanimity. From the rudest to the ripest they echo the verse of the evangelist philosopher when he wrote: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

The highest teachings of them all are expressed in the formula: "And the word of the Lord came saying—"

We may go back to the earliest forms of the ancient Egyptian religion, and we find the doctrine that the man who had learned and could pronounce the divine words revealed through the god Thoth (Thought, Mind), by their utterance would be ele-

vated to the god, and be blended with him, as one and inseparable. "The primary idea concerning the ritual formulas was assimilation to God, brought about by the power of the words themselves." *

Probably in all primitive faiths the word is regarded as a magical power in itself. In Egypt it was believed that by words the most powerful of the gods could be made obedient to the will of man. By them, as exorcisms or incantations everywhere, demons could be loosed or bound, and spirits summoned from the vasty deep. The stock in trade of the Indian medicine-man is principally his store of exorcisms, and among the Goras of North-Western India any one can become a priest who will learn the formulas which compel the demons. †

Our word "charm" comes from the Latin *carmen*, the sacred rhythmic formula, such as Virgil averred could by its occult power drag the moon from the sky.

"Carmina vel cælo possunt deducere lunam."

There were such songs scarcely less potent among

* Lenormant, *Chaldean Magic*, p. 96.

† E. F. Dalton, *Ethnology of Bengal*, p. 60. "Nothing more colors Hindu life," writes Mr. Walhouse, "than the belief in the efficacy of *mantras*—forms of prayer or powerful words, by which all the relations of life may be influenced, and even the gods may be bound."—*Jour. Anthrop. Inst.*, vol. xiv., p. 189.

the Australian Blacks, which could summon the rain in dry seasons or cause it to cease in floods.*

No demon, however malevolent, can resist, in their belief, the power of the right word. The natives of New South Wales say that an evil spirit in the shape of a dwarf with monstrous head roams the woods at night and devours those whom he meets. But if the man utters the word "Boonbolong," the dwarf passes on his way and does not harm him. †

When Jesus was in Capernaum, and at his command an unclean spirit had gone out of a man possessed, the multitude said one to the other,—τις εστι ουτος λογος, "What is this Word, by the authority and might of which this man casts out devils?" (Luke iv., 36.) They believed he used some cabalistic formula of exorcism which constrained the demons to obey his will.

Nowhere did the Word display its terrible effect more fearfully than in the curse or imprecation. In ancient Assyria, writes Professor Sayce, "The power of the *mamit*, or curse, was such that the gods themselves could not transgress it." ‡ Not only did it unloose the demons of destruction, but it constrained

* Curr, *The Australian Race*, vol. i., p. 48.

† *Report of Com. of N. South Wales to the Columbian Exposition*, p. 7.

‡ Sayce, *Hibbert Lectures*, p. 309.

the gods against their will, changing them from protectors to enemies. *

Amid savage tribes, in undoubted and repeated instances, the curse kills as certainly as a knife. Among the western Indians of our country, when a medicine-man "gathers his medicine," that is, rises to the full height of inspired volition, and utters a withering curse on his antagonist, commanding him to die, the latter knows all hope is lost. Sometimes he drops dead on the spot, or at best lingers through a few days of misery. † The Australians believe that the curse of a potent magician will kill at the distance of a hundred miles. ‡

Not only is the word thus mighty in the unseen world, but it is itself the very efflux and medium of the divine power itself.

Thus in the drama of creation recorded in the first chapter of Genesis we read: "And God said, 'Light, be,' and light was"; and in the corresponding myth of the Quiche Indians of Central America, the maker of the world calls forth, *Uleu!* Earth! and at the word the solid land grew forth. §

Sir George Grey relates a story that in New Zea-

* Lenormant, *Chaldean Magic*, p. 63.

† Brinton, *Myths of the New World*, p. 318.

‡ The appropriate rite thus to destroy an enemy is described by Curr, *The Australian Race*, vol. ii., p. 610.

§ *Popol Vuh, le Livre Sacré des Quiches*, p. 10.

land there was a huge, carved wooden head, which could speak, and by the dreadful might of its words slew all who approached it. But when by superior magic its voice was reduced to a whisper, its power was gone and it was destroyed. *

It is to be noted that the magical influence of the word is *independent of its meaning*. It is distinctly *not* the idea, image, or truth which it conveys to which is ascribed its efficacy. On the contrary, the most potent of all words are those which have no meaning at all or of which the sense has been lost.

This is constantly seen in the formulas of savage tribes. They preserve archaisms of language no longer understood by those who utter them, and in other instances they are obviously made up of syllables strung together without regard to intelligibility.

The same fact is abundantly shown in the cabalistic jargon of classical and mediæval diviners, and in the charms drawn from contemporary folklore. Indeed, the famous cabalist, Pico de Mirandola, asserts that a word without meaning has most influence over the demons.

Not only one or a few words may be thus unintelligible, but long communications may be in articulate sounds conveying no thought whatever. This

* *Polynesian Mythology*, p. 284.

is the "gift of tongues," the power to speak in unknown languages.

It is common in savage life. Many of the important chants at the sacred ceremonies are mere iterations of meaningless syllables. The idea would seem to be that what men cannot understand, the gods do; or else, that it is the god expressing himself through human organs but in a speech unknown to human ears. Bishop Calloway says that the charm songs of the Zulus are often quite unintelligible to themselves*; and this is one of many examples.

Of all words, the most sacred is the Name. In primitive thought, the personal name of an individual is not merely an attribute, it is an integral part of his Self, his Ego. The Eskimos say that a man consists of three parts, his body, his soul, and his name, and of these the last mentioned alone achieves immortality. This seems very advanced. Most of our ambitious men appear to think more of rendering their names than their souls worthy of immortality. Very generally, the name was associated with the personal guardian spirit, derived from it or indicating it, and hence received a ceremonial sanctity.†

* *Religious System of the Amazulu*, p. 413.

† The expression in the Algonkin tongue for a person of the same name is *nind owiawina*, "He is another myself" (Cuoq, *Lexique Algonquine*, p. 113).

As being a part of oneself, injury or contumely heaped upon a name reacted upon the individual who bore it, and even life could be destroyed in this manner.

For this reason, throughout America the natives rarely disclosed their real appellations, but were designated by nicknames. In Australia some tribes were so cautious that the young men on entering adult life renounced the names by which they had been known and assumed no other; while a woman preserved indeed her appellation, but no one except her husband was entitled to pronounce it.* The Dyaks take the prudent precaution, after an attack of illness, to change their names; so that the demon who sent the sickness may not recognise them, and continue his malevolent pursuit.†

In Polynesia, where the name was not thus concealed, it could be applied, according to the ceremonial law, only to the person, although it was generally a common noun. Hence arose the curious custom called *tepi*. All words which formed part of the name of the chieftain, and all syllables of other words which had a similar sound were dropped from the language and others substituted for them during his lifetime. Thus, forty or fifty of the most

* Curr, *ubi supra*, p. 246.

† Ling Roth, *Natives of Sarawak*, vol. i., p. 288.

common terms of the language would drop out of use at once, and as many more be materially changed in sound, to the great annoyance of missionaries and visitors. *

The Kamschatkans were so particular that they would not name the bear or wolf, for these animals understood the language of men, and would be offended at such familiarity! †

Even if it does not hear, the power for good or evil which a being has, can, in primitive opinion, be communicated through its name. For that reason the priest known as the *flamen dialis* among the Romans would not only avoid touching a dog or bear, but he would not pronounce their names, lest he should be contaminated! And to this day a Mohammedan, if he pronounces the word for "hog," will spit, that his mouth may not be defiled by the name of the unclean beast.

Even more universal was the avoidance of the names of the dead. This prevailed throughout Africa, Australia, Tasmania, Polynesia, and America. The reason was, that the name was held to be a part of the spirit of the departed, and to pronounce it would disturb the rest of the grave, and probably

* H. Hale, *Ethnography of the U. S. Exploring Expedition*, p. 288.

† Klemm, *Culturgeschichte*, Bd. ii., p. 329.

indeed bring the perturbed spirit to the circle of auditors. *

If such was the case with the names of men and beasts, how sacred must be the names of the gods!

This is an extraordinary feature, common to the rudest superstitions of savage and the most developed faiths of civilised lands, and it has for its basis the conception of the name as a real attribute, a part of the Self.

"In all the religions of ancient Asia," writes Lenormant, "the mysterious Name was considered a real and divine being, who had a personal existence and exclusive power over both nature and the world of spirits." †

In the name dwelt the essential power of the deity. An Egyptian magical formula, placed in the mouth of a god, reads:

"I am the elect of millions of years.
Were my name spoken on the bank of a river, it would be consumed;

* This subject has been discussed by Andree, *Ethnographische Parallelen*, pp. 165–184, and other writers. On the "name soul" among the American Indians I have collected material in *Myths of the New World*, p. 277, *sq.* Most American and Australian tribes would not name the dead. On the other hand, in the robust religion of the ancient Germans, the names of the loved departed and of great chiefs were shouted out at the banquets, and a horn drained to their *minni*, affectionate memory. J. Grimm, *Teutonic Mythology*, vol. i., p. 59.

† *Chaldean Magic*, p. 104.

Were it uttered on earth, fire would burst from the ground." *

The knowledge of this name by another enabled him to exert a power over the god himself. That by naming a demon, he can be forced to appear, was a cardinal principle of ancient magic. "The list of divine names possessed by the Roman pontiffs in their *indigitamenta* was their most efficacious magical instrument, laying at their mercy all the forces of the spirit world." †

For this reason, the gods of ancient Egypt sedulously concealed their names, and we cannot doubt that it was the fear of some such subjection of their deity through the malicious use of his name, which led the early Jews to conceal it so well that it is now lost. It was the same with the Semitic Arabians. Instead of the true divine name, they substituted Allah, the Mighty One, so that now the original is conjectural or unknown.

This extends to the rudest tribes. The African traveller Holub says that the actual name of the god of the Marutse and allied tribes along the Zambesi river is Njambe; but to avoid revealing this, they employ the term Molemo, "He above." Among the south-eastern Australian tribes their

* The original is in the Turin papyrus.

† Granger, *Worship of the Romans*, p. 277.

leading deity is Turramulun (the One-legged), who lives in the sky. His name is never revealed to women, nor to youths before their initiation to manhood. *

The Choctaw Indians regarded the name of their highest divinity as self-existing, essential, and unspeakable. Therefore, when it was necessary to refer to him, they adopted a circumlocution, for, says their historian, "according to their fixed standard of speech, had they made any nearer approach to the beloved Name, it would have been reckoned a profanation." †

How completely this notion has survived among ourselves is shown by the second clause of that prayer on which we have all been brought up, "Hallowed be Thy Name." But how few who repeat it reflect that the name referred to, whatever it was, is now through long concealment totally lost!

Thus we see that the doctrine of "the ineffable Name" is the common property of savage and cultured faiths.

From the misuse of the name to compel the obedience of the god, or to injure his dignity and worth, came the idea of profanity, sternly forbidden by the early Jewish law,—"Take not the name of the Lord

* Howitt, in *Jour. Anthrop. Inst.*, xiii., p. 192.
† James Adair, *Hist. of the North Am. Indians*, p. 54.

in vain"—and by many other faiths of a primitive aspect.

Quite consistently with this idea of real existence in names, the god who had many names had just as many powers or faculties. For that reason, the prominent gods of ancient Egypt, especially Isis, were called upon by so numerous epithets that the Greeks spoke of them as "myrionomous," ten-thousand-named. In later Babylonian times all the names of the fifty great gods were ascribed to Êa, by which process they were themselves absorbed into his being. "When they lost their names, they lost their personality as well." * To the Mohammedan the "One hundred names of God" repeated in the Koran express the multitude of His powers.

The same tendency is visible in the native religions of America. The Mexicans applied many names to the same divinity, and in the *Popol Vuh*, the sacred book of the Quiches, the chief deity is called by a variety of titles, some sounding strange to us, as "the opossum-hunter," the "green snake," the "calebash," all of symbolic sense. †

In the South Seas, the name of a god, adopted by a chief, identified him in the opinion of the people

* Prof. Sayce in *Hibbert Lectures*, p. 305.

† Sahagun, *Historia de Nueva España*, lib. i., *passim*; *Popol Vuh*, cap. i.; Stoll, *Ethnographie der Rep. Guatemala*, p. 118.

with the god and secured for him the reverence and adoration ascribed to his divine namesake.*

This idea is that which in many early and later faiths led to what are called the "theophorous" or god-bearing names, where the individual is called by the proper name of a saint or god. They were especially frequent in early Semitic religions, and are customary among Catholics to-day.†

We find their origin in the custom, very general among the American Indians, for the person to take the name of the spirit who appears to him during the vigils and fasts which attend the ceremonies of initiation to manhood. By assuming the name of the divinity, the two natures or essences are believed to be united. This was precisely also the opinion of the early Christians, as we see in the expression of St. Ephrem, a Syrian saint of the fourth century: "Merciful was the Lord in that He clad on our Names. His Names make us great; our Names make Him small."‡

If we seek the explanation of this strange power

* Gill, *Myths and Songs of the South Pacific*, p. 6.

† Comp. W. Robertson Smith, *Religion of the Semites*, p. 41.

‡ *Select Works of St. Ephrem*, p. 122. (Trans. by the Rev. J. B. Morris.) The name of Jesus was regarded by the early church as magical in itself. Arnobius says of him, "whose Name, when heard, puts to flight evil spirits, imposes silence on soothsayers, prevents men from consulting the augurs, and frustrates the efforts of magicians."—*Adversus Gentes*, lib. i., cap. 46.

attributed to words and names, often apart from their signification, we shall find it in their extreme activity as agents of mental suggestion. They are intense psychic stimulants, stirring the soul to its depths. The Word is by odds the most effective of all agencies to bring about altered and abnormal mental conditions either in the individual or in the mass. Through it, judiciously applied, the profoundest hypnotic trance, or the wildest, maniacal nervous seizures can be produced at will. *

The repetition of a word greatly heightens its suggestive influence and promotes the exclusion from the mind of all other concepts and associations than its own. In many languages, a word repeated is equivalent to the superlative degree, and in every tongue the repetition has a similar effect, as in the phrase: "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth."

No words in this relation are more efficient than names. Consider what our own lives would be if we had to change our names every year, how it would seem to obliterate our personality, how it would dissipate all dreams of posthumous glory and renown. Our consciousness of Self would suffer diminution, and the keenest interest of our lives would be lost. Our name is really and truly a part of ourselves, and he who would rob us of it would

* See Stoll, *Suggestion und Hypnotismus*, p. 14, *seq.*

leave us poor indeed. Why is every point of view carved with the names of obscure tourists, why does it give us pleasure to note our names among the hundreds at some grand function, but that we think it more desirable to live "as naked nominations, without desert or noble deeds," as Sir Thomas Browne said, than to pass away and leave not that little which the Roman poet considered the least,—*nominis umbra*, "the shadow of a name."

For the practical purposes of life the name confers or creates the personality. This fact exerted a profound influence in the earliest development of religion. The vague sense of spiritual power first became centred in the idea of an individual, of a personal god, when it received a name.

The primitive words of barbaric tongues used to signifying the divine have not the connotation of individuality. *Wakan*, *mahopa*, *manito*, *teotl*, *huaca*, *ku*, are such words from American languages, not one of which conveys the concept of personality. That concept was first gained when some single expression of spiritual power was differentiated and named.*

The essential religious element in the Word is its

* The *pĕtara* of the Borneans is at times used as a personal name of the chief divine being, at others in the vague sense of "duty" or "supernatural." Ling Roth, *Natives of Sarawak*, vol. i., 179. Analogous instances have already been mentioned.

power to bring man into relation to the gods. This is possible in three directions,—we may address them; they may address us; or we may talk about them. These furnish the three forms of sacred expression in speech: 1. The word *to* the gods,—Prayer; 2. The word *from* the gods,—Revelation; and 3. The word *about* the gods,—the Myth. We will consider each of these.

I. The Word to the Gods.—1. The Word to the gods is Prayer. It is a very prominent and nigh universal element in primitive religions. The injunction "Pray always" is nowhere else so nearly carried out. Captain Clark, an officer of our army with the widest experience of Indian life, writes: "It seems a startling assertion, but it is, I think, true, that there are no people who pray more than Indians. Both superstition and custom keep always in their minds the necessity for placating the anger of the invisible and omnipotent power, and for supplicating the active exercise of his faculties in their behalf." *

In fact, Prayer may be said to be the life of the faith of savage tribes, and it is so recognised by themselves. According to the legends of the Maoris of New Zealand, when they first migrated to that island from Hawaii, they did not bring with them their ancestral gods, but took care to carry along the

* *Indian Sign Language*, p. 309.

potent prayers which the gods cannot but hear and grant. *

Some writers have claimed that certain tribes have been found without any notion of an appeal to unseen agencies, and have quoted as instances the Yahgans of Tierra del Fuego, and the Mincopies of the Andaman Islands. But closer examination proves that the priests of the Yahgans call upon a mysterious being, Aiapakal,† and other invisible existences, and the Mincopies are acknowledged to have prayers at the present time.

The earliest hymns and prayers do not, as a rule, contain definite requests, but are general appeals to the god to be present, to partake of the feast which is spread, or to join the dance and to continue his good offices toward those who call upon him. Such are the hymns of the Rig Veda, and those of ancient Mexico, which I have collected and published.‡ They are like the *evocatio deorum* of the Romans.

The three forms of "the Word to the gods," or Prayer, are those of thanksgiving, by praise or laudation; of petition for assistance or protection; and

* Sir George Grey, *Polynesian Mythology*, p. 164.

† Hyades et Deniker, *Mission Scientifique au Cap Horn*, p. 376. Earlier voyagers write: "They certainly have ideas of a spiritual existence."—*Narrative of the Voyages of the Adventure and Beagle*, vol. ii., p. 179.

‡ *Ancient Nahuatl Poetry* (Philadelphia, 1890); *Rig Veda Americanus* (Philadelphia, 1890).

of penitence or contrition for neglect of duty. All these are common in the most primitive faiths. In all of them you will find the deity appealed to as great, mighty, a lord, a king, terror-inspiring, loving his followers, and by hundreds of such epithets of amplification and flattery. He is addressed endearingly as father or grandfather; not at all implying a physical relationship, as some modern writers have erroneously stated; but with reference to the loving care he is supposed to extend to his worshippers.

As we might expect, most of the petitions in primitive prayers are for material benefits. The burden of most of them is well expressed by one in the Rig Veda: "O God, prosper us in getting and in keeping!" They ask for increase of goods, abundant food, success in war, and fine weather.

Yet among the rudest there are signs of an appreciation of something higher. A prayer of the Khonds, a Dravidian tribe of Northern India, reads: "O Lord, we know not what is good for us. Thou knowest what it is. For it we pray."

It is strange to find among the Navahoes, a rude hunting tribe of our western territories, an intense longing for the beautiful. One of their prayers runs: "O Lord on high, whose youth is immortal, ruler above, I have made you the offering, preserve my body and members, preserve it in beauty, make

all things beautiful, let all be completed in beauty." *

At other times the prayer is for moral control, as in this of a Sioux Indian: "O my grandfather, the Earth, I ask that thou givest me a long life and strength of body. When I go to war, let me capture many horses and kill many enemies. But in peace, let not anger enter my heart." †

Penitential prayers are uttered when one has broken the ceremonial law or *tabu;* and in general, when misfortune and defeat seem to indicate that the gods are irritated at some insult offered them, though the worshipper may not be clear what it is.

"O merciful Lord," says an Aztec prayer, "let this chastisement with which thou hast visited us give us freedom from evil and follies." ‡

In many prayers we find formulas preserved which are no longer understood; and very frequently the power of the prayer is believed to be increased by repeating it a number of times. The prayer choruses of nearly all savage tribes offer endless examples of this. The notion of increased force by repetition, a notion founded on the augmented suggestive power of the Word through its iteration, to which I have

* Dr. W. Matthews, *The Mountain Chant of the Navahoes*, p. 465.

† Clark, *Indian Sign Language*, p. 309.

‡ Sahagun, *Hist. de Nueva España*, lib. vi. Other examples are given by this writer.

already referred, is so common that it was especially noted and condemned by Jesus as of no spiritual value.

This form of prayer, indeed, degenerated into a mere magical formula, as we see was the case with the apostolic benediction of the Christian church during the middle ages, which became a charm in use by necromancers and sorcerers.

In its sublimest essence, however, prayer has been recognised as something far beyond any form of suppliancy. It is, as an orthodox authority says, "the habitual state of a being who constantly lives in relation to God, and cultivates a constant exchange with Him."* So understood, it is even more than inspiration; it is a communion of spiritual life, a dwelling in God. This is the precise mental condition of many of the mystics and devotees of primitive religions. They are with the god, the god with and in them.

II. The Word from the Gods.—If the mere name of the god was thus mighty and thus venerated, how much more the words he himself uttered! The "Word of God," as understood by the worshippers, is the kernel and core of every faith on earth. Every religion is, to its votaries, a revelation. None is so material, none so primitive,

* *Encyclopédie des Sciences Religieuses*, s. v. Prière.

as to claim any other foundation than the expressed will of divinity. None is so devoid of ritual as to lack some means of ascertaining this will.

The word from the gods is clothed under two forms, the Law and the Prophets,—in other terms, Precept and Prediction. In every religion, from the most primitive to the highest, we find these two modes of divine utterance.

In the earliest phases of religion, the law is essentially prohibitory. It is in the form of the negative, "Thou shalt not——." Ethnologists have adopted for this a word from Polynesian dialects, *tabu*, or *tapu*, akin to *tapa*, to name,* that which was solemnly named or announced being sacred, and hence forbidden to the *profanum vulgus*.

The *tabu* extends its veto into every department of primitive life. It forbids the use of certain articles of food or raiment; it hallows the sacred areas; it lays restrictions on marriage, and thus originates what is known as the totemic bond; it denounces various actions, often the most trivial and innocent, and thus lays the foundation for the ceremonial law.

* Other forms are *tapui*, to make sacred; *tabui*, to keep from; *tabuaki*, to bless. Here, as elsewhere, there is a synonomy between "sacred" or "holy" and "accursed," because it is accursed to defile that which is holy. Another, and less probable, derivation is given by Frazer, in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, s. v. "Taboo." He is perfectly right, however, in saying that the original form of the *tabu* is due, not to its civil, but to its religious element.

The penalty for the infraction of the *tabu* includes all that flows from the anger of the gods, reaching to death itself. A few examples, from the very rudest religions, will serve to illustrate this.

The Kamschatkans in the beginning of the last century were very low in the scale of humanity and curiously pessimistic. They had a hero-god, Kutka, their mythic progenitor, of whom they told many strange and disgusting stories. They cursed him oftener than they blessed him, and refused to believe that anything good could come from the gods. But to escape the ill-will of these malevolent beings they practised various ceremonies and refrained from sundry actions calculated to displease those capricious spirits. Thus, one must not cook fish and flesh in the same pot, or he would be punished with sores; he must not step in the tracks of a bear, or he would be visited with a skin disease; he must not scrape the snow from his shoes with a knife, or there would be violent storms; and so on, through a long law of prohibitions. *

The Mincopies of the Andaman Islands have no forms of worship, they have no invocations to the gods, their language, indeed, has no original word for "prayer." They believe firmly, however, in the

* Klemm, *Culturgeschichte*, vol. ii., pp. 368, *sq.*, after Steller, who visited Kamschatka about 1740.

existence of numerous spirits, not the souls of the deceased, but self-created and undying, who will injure them if they commit certain transgressions, such as to cook turtle or fish by burning a particular kind of wood; to roast a pig instead of boiling it, and so on.*

The Yahgans of Tierra del Fuego have been often, though erroneously, quoted as a tribe devoid of religion. Their ceremonial law was rigid. The hairs that fell from the head must be burned, or the individual would fall ill; the name of the dead must not be mentioned, or the ghost would return and plague them; the young ducklings must not be killed, or bad weather would follow.†

The *tabu* in Polynesia, whence it derives its name, was carried to an incredible degree of stringency. The dread of its violation was so vivid, that in itself it was often the cause of the death of the offender.‡

The second form of the "Word from God" was when it was uttered as a prophecy, a prediction of the future. In this form it appears throughout the world under the innumerable aspects of divination, as oracles, prophetic utterances, forecasts of time to come, second-sight, clairvoyance, and the like.

* Man, in *Jour. Anthrop. Society*, vol. xii., pp. 159, 173.

† Authorities above quoted, and Darwin, *Descent of Man*, p. 95.

‡ For abundant examples of the *tabu* in various nations see Frazer's article in the *Encyc. Britannica* above referred to.

The essence of every religious rite may be said to be divinatory, inasmuch as its final aim is either to learn or to modify the Will of God, and thus to influence the future of the individual or society by extra-natural agencies.

There is nothing in this derogatory to religion as an element of mind. The constant effort of the reason is to banish the idea of chance from the universe; and he who regards the Will of God as a law of the universe does exclude chance from its events just in proportion as he learns that Will and acts in conformity to it.

Prediction in primitive religions is by two widely different methods, Divination and Prophecy.

The diviner, relying on his own sense and reasoning powers, foretells the future by observation of certain trains of events which he believes reveal the intentions of the gods; the prophet is one inspired by the divine mind itself to speak its own words and to convey directly the thoughts and wishes of deity.

This distinction is visible in early religions. Any one can learn the "signs" and "omens" which will be auspicious or inauspicious for his undertakings; though, of course, to read their full significance one must have made special studies in the art of augury. To become an inspired prophet requires a much more serious preparation, and some form of communion direct with the gods must be established.

III.—The Word concerning the gods. A brilliant French writer (E. Scherer) has said: "It was the Word that made the gods," "*Le mot, c'est l'artisan des idoles.*" He but expressed in a pointed apothegm what the profound German mythologist Kuhn stated in more formal terms when he wrote: "The foundation of mythology is to be looked for in the domain of language."

What, indeed, does the term "myth" itself mean? It is merely the Greek for "a word," something spoken, and in this general sense it is used by Homer. Later, its connotation became restricted to what was spoken concerning the gods, the narratives of their doings, the descriptions of their abodes and attributes.

Men began to frame such tales the moment they consciously recognised the existence of such unseen agencies. They were founded on visions, dreams, and those vague mental states which, as I have shown, fill up so large a part of savage life. They were not intentional fictions, by any means, for the criteria between the real and unreal fade away in those psychic conditions, and the faintest hold on actuality is enough to guarantee an indefinitely complex fancy.

It was a strange error by one of the most earnest students of primitive religions, the Reverend W. Robertson Smith, when he advocated his theory

that the myth was derived from the ritual, not the ritual from the myth.* Had he studied the actual religious condition of the rudest tribes, he would have found them with scarcely any ritual but a most abundant mythology; and he would have discovered that where the myth was taken from the ritual, it is when the latter has lost its original meaning, and some other is devised to explain it.

As examples of such notions, I may take the Bushmen of South Africa. They enjoy the general reputation of being the lowest of the human race. They have no temples, no altars, no ritual; yet the missionary Bleek collected among them thousands of tales concerning their gods in their relations to men and animals.†

The Andamanese are alleged to have no forms of worship whatever; but they have many myths about the mighty Puluga, self-created and immortal, about the origin of fire, and the transactions of the invisible spirits.

It would be easy to give many other examples, but it is enough to refute such an opinion by referring to the vast body of myths in all religious peoples which have no reference to ritual whatever.

* *Religion of the Semites*, p. 18.

† Filling in manuscript, he says, seventy-seven quarto volumes, and far from exhausting the supply! *Bushman Folk-lore*, p. 6. (London, 1875.)

The sources of mythology are psychic. They are not to be traced to the external world, whether ritual or natural. Myths are not figurative explanations of natural phenomena, they are not vague memories of ancestors and departed heroes, they are not philosophic speculations or poetic fancies. They are distinctly religious in origin, and, when genuine, are the fruit of that insight into the divine, that "beatific vision," on which I have laid such emphasis as the real and only foundation of all religions whatsoever.

They receive their form and expression through spoken language, and are, therefore, intimately associated with, often dependent upon its sounds, and laws. In how many ways this may influence them I may briefly mention.

Primitive language is predominantly concrete. The connotations of its terms are mainly objective. By this necessity arose the materialisation of the spiritual thought. It had to be expressed under external imagery.

Primitive languages are usually intensely individualising and specific. There is scarcely a native tongue in America in which one could say "hand"; one must always add a pronoun indicating whose hand is meant, "my, thy, his," hand.

The generic distinctions in such tongues are often

far reaching and real, not purely formal, as with us A word in the masculine or feminine gender is understood to mean that the object to which it refers is positively male or female. Many other distinctions are thus conveyed, as what is animate and inanimate, noble or vulgar, etc.

The result of these distinctions in such languages as the Aryan and Semitic was that the gods perforce were arranged sexually as male and female, and this persists to-day even in our English tongue.

Many myths arose directly from words, through casual similarities between them which were attributed to some divine cause. This is the theory so well known by the advocacy of Professor Max Müller, who is charged, unfairly I believe, with having called mythology a "disease of language." He, Professor Kuhn, and others lay great and just stress on the influence of "paronomy," that is, similarity in the sound of words, as the starting-point of myths. They have adduced endless examples from the classical tongues, but I shall content myself with two from wholly primitive sources.

I have just referred to the Andamanese as at the bottom of religious growth, but with an abundant mythology. In their tongue it happens that the word *garub* means "night" and also a species of caterpillar. It is probably a mere coincidence of

sound. But they saw in it much more. Night to them is a depressing period, and it would not have been created by the supreme Puluga without just cause. Evidently the double meaning of the word *garub* indicated this. And as the wise men proceed on that universally sound opinion that when there is a row there is a woman in it, they perceive that some woman must have wantonly killed a *garub*, a caterpillar, in order that Puluga should have sent *garub*, the night, as a punishment. And this is the sum of a long mythical story.*

Another example is from a far distant area, from among the Carrier Indians of British America. The arctic fox which they hunt has a sharp yelp which sounds *khaih*. Their word for "light" is *yekkhaih*. Evidently the fox was the animal who first called for the light and, by the magical power of the word, obtained it. Through what difficulties he accomplished this is told in a long and curious myth obtained from them by Father Morice.†

In the development of myths it was, indeed, often the case that those concerning one deity could be told of another—singularly incongruous as it often was,—or that the divine attributes primarily assigned to a

* Man, *ubi supra*, p. 172.
† Morice, *Trans. Roy. Soc. Canada*, 1892, p. 125.

deity and drawn from its character could be transferred to a human type, as when those of a flower were placed on the god.*

It is equally an error to suppose that myths were at first mere stories and received their religious character later. The true myth has a religious aim from the outset, and is not the product of an idle fancy. Those who have taught otherwise have been misled by a superficial acquaintance with the psychology of savage tribes. Mythology comes from religion, not religion from mythology.

The savage understands perfectly the difference between a sacred and a secular story, between a narrative of the doings of the gods handed down from his ancestors, and the creation of the idle fancy brought forth to amuse a circle of listeners.

I have already referred to the strange similarity in the myths of savage nations far asunder in space and kinship. The explanation of this is not to be found in borrowing or in recollections from a common, remote unity; but in the laws of the human mind. The same myths are found all over the world, with the same symbolism and imagery, woven into cycles dealing with the same great questions of

*This branch of the subject has been fully discussed by Keary, *Outlines of Prim. Belief*, Preface and chapter i.; and Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, *passim*.

human thought. This is because they arise from identical psychic sources, and find expression under obligatory forms, depending on the relations of man to his environment, and on the unity of mental process throughout the race.

It is not possible for me at the present time to enter far into the vast temple of mythology. I must content myself with selecting a few of the most prominent mythical cycles, aiming by these to show how they form the ground-plan and substructure of the whole edifice of mythical narrative.

I will select seven which are the most prominent, those relating to: 1. the Cosmical Concepts; 2. the Sacred Numbers; 3. the Drama of the Universe; 4. the Earthly Paradise; 5. the Conflict of Nature; 6. the Returning Saviour; and 7. the Journey of the Soul.

1. *The Cosmical Concepts.*—Wherever man is placed on the earth, he is guided in his movements by space and direction. These are among the earliest notions he derives from the impressions on his senses. His anatomical conformation, the anterior and posterior planes of his body and his right and left sides, lead him to a fourfold division of space, as before him and behind him, to one side or the other. He conceives the earth, therefore, as a plain with four quarters, the chief directions as four, to wit, the car-

dinal points, and the winds as four principal currents from these points. The sky is to him a solid covering, supported at each of its four corners by a tree, a pillar, or a giant, and is itself divided into four courts or regions like the earth.

These were his cosmical concepts, his primal ideas of the universe, and they entered deeply into his life, his acts, and his beliefs. He founded his social organisation on them, he pitched his tents or built his cities on their model, he oriented his edifices to simulate them, and framed his myths to explain and perpetuate them.

We find these concepts practically universal. The symbolic figures which represent them are scratched in the soil at the *Bora*, or initiation ceremonies of the Australians; they are etched into the pots and jars we dig up in the mounds of the Mississippi valley; they are painted in strange figures on the manuscripts of the Mayas and Mexicans; they reappear in the mysterious symbols of the svastika and the Chinese Ta-Ki; they underlie the foundation stones of Egyptian pyramids, and recur in the lowest strata of Babylonian ziggarats.*

2. The Sacred Numbers.—The cosmical concepts were closely connected with the sacred numbers.

* See *Myths of the New World*, chap. iii.; also, an article on symbolism in ancient American art, by Prof. Putnam and Mr. Willoughby in *Proc. Am. Ass. Adv. Science*, vol. xliv., p. 302.

Wherever we turn in myth and rite, in symbolism or sacred art, we find certain numbers which have a hallowed priority in religious thought. These numbers are pre-eminently the three and the four, and those derived from them. They are distinctly antithetic in character, arising from contrasting psychical sources, which I will briefly explain.

The number *four* derives its sacredness in mythology from the cosmical concepts just mentioned. It was, therefore, connected with the objective and phenomenal world, and had a material and concrete origin and applications.

The number *three*, on the other hand, was surrounded with the halo of sanctity from the operations of the mind itself. These, the processes of thinking, are carried on by a triple or rather triune action of the intelligence, which logicians express in the three fundamental "laws of thought," and in the trilogy of the syllogism. These ever-present laws of thinking impress themselves on the mind and mental acts whether they are recognised or not, and all the more absolutely in that involuntary action in which, as "sub-limital consciousness" or "psychic automatism," I have revealed to you the true source of the conception of the Divine.†

† I have presented this subject with greater detail in an article "On the Origin of Sacred Numbers" in the *American Anthropologist*, April, 1894. The contrast of symbolism of the three and the four

How natural, then, that we should find in so many primitive faiths the belief in the triplicate nature of divinity, should find myths, idols, rites, so devised as to reflect and inculcate this! Such is the case, and it is easy to quote examples, whether we turn to the Indians of America or the Indians of Hindostan, whether we touch on the triads of ancient Egypt or those of the Druids, whether we recall the three Norns of Teutonic myth or the three Fates of the Hellenes. As a writer, who has made the subject his special branch, observes: "It is impossible to study any single system of worship throughout the world, without being struck with the peculiar persistence of the triple number in regard to Divinity." *

The exception to this would naturally be where the concept of the number itself was too feeble to

is familiar to students. Such a popular text-book as Keil's *Manual of Biblical Archæology* states that four was the predominating number in the temples, altars, and rites of the ancient world, it being, "according to an idea common to all antiquity, the symbol of the cosmos"; while the three was "the mark of the Divine Being in His various manifestations" (pp. 127, 128).

* Westcott, *Symbolism of Numbers*, p. 7. I have given several examples of triple or triune deities in America in *Myths of the New World*, pp. 84, 187, 188. From other fields I may note the triad Kane, Ku, and Lono of Hawaii (Fornander, *Polynesian Race*, vol. i., p. 61); that on the Marquesas objectively represented by three sticks tied together (Dr. Tautain, in *L'Anthropologie*, tom. vii., p. 544); the triad of Tangaloa, Creator, Maui, Sustainer, and Tiki, Revealer, elsewhere in Polynesia (Hale, *Ethnog. and Philol.*, p. 24).

impress itself upon the myth. There are tribes who cannot count four, whose languages have no word for any number beyond two, and yet who are by no means deficient either in mythologies or practical arts.* Among these, we should look in vain for the sacredness of numbers.

3. The Drama of the Universe.—I have already quoted the saying of the wise men of ancient India, "There is no limit to the knowing of the Self that knows." He who through meditation and prayer has become one with God, knows what God knows. Thus it is that in the rudest tribes we find the story of the beginning of things clearly told as coming from the inspired knowledge of the seers.

This story has many points of similarity, wherever we find it, not owing, I hasten again to say, to any unity of origin in place, but due to the higher unity of the mind of man, and the necessary results of its activity.

Look in what continent we please, we shall find the myth of a Creation or of a primeval construction, of a Deluge or a destruction, and of an expected Restoration. We shall find that man has ever looked on this present world as a passing scene in the shifting panorama of time, to be ended by some cataclysm

* Numerous examples are collected in L. L. Conant, *The Number Concept*, chap. ii.

and to be followed by some period of millennial glory.

Whenever we have a fairly complete body of the mythology of a primitive stock, we discover the same scenario of the vast drama of the universe, varying abundantly in detail and local colour, but true to the grandiose lines of its composition.

It is instructive to analyse its various elements and trace them to their psychic sources. Let us begin with the modes of action of the creative power itself.

This mysterious power is known to man under three forms.

The simplest is that of the moulder or manufacturer, as the potter makes his pots, the shoemaker his shoes. This is the conception which underlies many myths of the Creator, as is shown by the names he bears. Thus the Australians called him Baiame, "the cutter-out," as one cuts out a sandal from a skin, or a figure from bark. The Maya Indians used the term Patol, from the verb *pat*, to mould, as a potter his clay, Bitol, which has the same meaning, and Tzacol, the builder, as of a house.* With the Dyaks of Borneo, the Creator is Tupa, the forger, as one forges a spear-blade†; and so on.

* In the Quiche and Tzental dialects.

† From the verb *tumpa*, to forge. Ling Roth, *Natives of Sarawak*, vol. i., p. 165.

The second form is that of creation in the sense of generation, and this is a constant simile in the myths, with reference to the process both in the vegetable and animal kingdoms.

The Creator is often referred to as the Father, the parent, more or less literally, of all that is. He has many such titles in the myths of America and Polynesia. In bi-sexual myths he is associated with some universal mother as the genetrix.

The third form is more recondite and loftier. In an earlier lecture I have emphasised how man is conscious within himself of the Will as an ultimate source of power. This he clearly recognised in his primitive conditions, and to its exertion repeatedly in his myths did he attribute the origin of things. They were self-evolved in the thought of the primal Being, or, as the native American expression is, they were "created by thought."

We find this in the rudest tribes of North America; and among the sedentary Zuñis of New Mexico, it is said of their demiurge Awonawilona that at the beginning "he conceived within himself and thought outward in space," in order to bring nature into existence. We see the connection in the Vitian dialect of Polynesian, in which *mania* is "to think"; *mana*, a miracle, and the power to perform one. According to the myths of Hawaii, it was "by an

act of the will" that their triple-natured Creator "broke up the night" (Po), and from its fragments evoked into being the world of light and life.*

Whatever the mode of creation, it was felt that it did not tell the whole story. The conceptions of time and space are in their essence limitless, and any creation must have been within them. Thus in Polynesian myth, Po represents not a dateless chaos but the debris of some former state of things; and in Algonquin legend the primeval ocean had engulfed some older world.†

This psychic molimen, ceaselessly acting, led in more developed mythologies to some defined fancies of these earlier periods of cosmic existence and thus to the myths of the Ages of the World or the Epochs of Nature. These are clearly outlined among the Mexicans, Mayas, Peruvians, and other tribes of the

* The Tinné of British America have the word *Nayéweri*, he who creates by thought (Petitot, *Les Dené Dindjie*, p. 63); the Algonquian Kitché Manito created the world "by an act of his will" (Schoolcraft, *Oneóta*, p. 342). For the Zuñians, see Cushing, *Zuñi Creation Myths*, p. 379; for the Polynesians, Hale, *Ethnography of the U. S. Exploring Expedition*, p. 399, and Fornander, *The Polynesian Race*, vol. i., p. 62.

There is no distinction between these opinions and that of the Christian church, so beautifully expressed by St. Ephrem the Syrian: "At the nod of His will, noiseless and gentle, out of nothing He created all." (*Select Works*, Translated by Rev. J. B. Morris, p. 185.)

† Fornander, *The Polynesian Race*, vol. i., p. 67; *Rel. de la Nouv. France*, 1634, p. 13.

New World and among many on the Eastern Hemisphere. The Aztecs count them as four, each followed by a formidable catastrophe, nearly or quite destroying all that lived.

The last of these destructions was generally blended with the notion of the emergence of the solid land from the primeval waters; and this is the origin of the Deluge Myth, the story of the Universal Flood, which we find in so many primitive peoples. It has excited especial attention, and by writers has been explained as the remembrance of some local overflow, or the recollection of the Hebrew tradition. Its real origin, purely psychic and derived from the myth of the Epochs of Nature, I explained thirty years ago in discussing its prevalence among American tribes.*

4. The Earthly Paradise.—Associated with this cycle is the myth of the terrestrial Paradise, watered by its four rivers, and enclosing the tree of life,—the happy abode of early man. The four rivers are the celestial streams from the four corners of the earth, watering the tree as the emblem of life. Thus we find it among the American Indians, the Sioux and

* In *Myths of the New World*, ch. vii. (first ed., 1868). Numerous writers, Klee, Andree, Lucas, etc., have treated the deluge myth with fulness. It is found even among the Mincopies of the Andaman Islands (Man, *u. s.*) and is quite common throughout Polynesia (Fornander, *u. s.*, vol. i., pp. 88, *sq.*). Various Australian tribes record it in detail, Smyth, *The Aborigines of Victoria*, vol. i., p. 430.

the Aztecs, the Mayas, the Polynesians, the ancient Aryans and Semites, etc.* Its origin is purely psychic, and though we can easily understand how the writer of the Book of Genesis sought to identify these mythical streams with some known to him, it is strangely out of date for scholars of to-day to follow his footsteps in that vain quest.†

5. *The Conflict of Nature.*—Another great cycle of psychic myths arose from the conflict of nature as apprehended by the primitive mind. Everywhere it seems to be raging around us. The hourly struggle of light with darkness; of day with night; of sunshine with storm; of summer with winter; of youth with age, of health with disease; of life with death; of all that makes toward good with all that makes toward evil—this endless battle of two principles underlies all movement and is forever stirring the soul to throw itself into the fray.

In a thousand forms this eternal combat was portrayed in myths, all pregnant with one meaning, bodying it forth in varied symbol and expression. The world-wide stories of the conflict of the first two

* Fornander (*u. s.*, vol. i., p. 79, *sq.*) discusses it in Polynesia. Their "tree of life" was a sacred "tabooed" bread-fruit tree. For America, see *Myths of the New World*, pp. 103–106.

† For this reason the works of Delitsch, Haupt, etc., on the question, *Wo lag das Paradies?*, are much less to the point than if their writers had studied the comparative mythology of the subject.

brothers, of men with gods, of giants with heroes, of the deities among themselves, arose from this perception of the unceasing interaction of natural forces, imagined as a war between conscious existences.

6. The Returning Saviour.—Out of this imagined turmoil and slaughter grew the wonderful mythical cycles concerning the Deliverer and Saviour. He would come from afar, out of the morning light or the distant sky, or he would be born of a virgin and the son of a god. He would lead his people to happiness and power, crushing by his might the enemies who afflicted them, whether on earth or among the envious gods. Blond-bearded and light-haired, even among Polynesians and Americans, we cannot err in seeing in this majestic figure the personified idea of Light, transferred from the plane of physical phenomena into that of psychical anticipation.*

7. The Journey of the Soul.—Lastly, I mention the cycle which describes the journey of the soul after death. The extraordinary similarity which I and others have pointed out between the opinions on this subject among Egyptians, Greeks, ancient Celts, and North American Indians,† is not to be

* This mythical cycle, as it arose among the native tribes of America, was made by me the special subject of a volume, *American Hero-Myths* (pp. 251, Philadelphia, 1882).

† See my *Essays of an Americanist*, pp. 135–147; J. Grimm, *Teutonic Mythology*, vol. ii., p. 832; Schrader and Jevons, *Prehistoric Antiquities of the Aryan Peoples*, p. 424.

explained by any theory of inter-communication, nor "by chance," as some have argued, but by fixed psychic laws, working over the same material under similar conditions.

The soul passes toward the west, crosses a sea or river to the abode of the departed, and meets everywhere nearly the same obstacles, to be overcome by proper preparations and mortuary ceremonies. I need not rehearse the details. They can be compared elsewhere. But their substantial identity confirms in an emphatic manner the thesis I am advocating, that in these universal mythical cycles we are dealing not with fragments of some one set of fancies borrowed from a common source, but with independent creations of the human intellect, framed under laws common to it everywhere, and which tend always to produce fruits generically everywhere the same.

LECTURE IV.

Primitive Religious Expression: In the Object.

CONTENTS:—Visual Ideas—Fetishism—Not Object-Worship only—Identical with Idolatry—Modern Fetishism—Animism—Not a Stadium of Religion—The Chief Groups of Religious Objects: 1. The Celestial Bodies—Sun and Moon Worship—Astrolatry; 2. The Four Elements—Fire, Air (the Winds), Water, and the Earth—Symbolism of Colours; 3. Stones and Rocks—Thunderbolts—Memorial Stones—Divining Stones; 4. Trees and Plants—The Tree of Life—The Sacred Pole and the Cross—The Plant-Soul—The Tree of Knowledge; 5. Places and Sites—High Places and Caves; 6. The Lower Animals—The Bird, the Serpent, etc.; 7. Man—Anthropism in Religion—The Worship of Beauty; 8. Life and its Transmission—Examples—Genesiac Cults—The Fatherhood of God—Love as Religion's Crown.

IF we analyse the concepts which occupy our minds, we shall find that most of them are derived from the sense of sight; they are what psychologists call "visual ideas." To these alone we owe the notions of space, size, form, colour, brightness, and motion.

By filling the brain with such images, sight becomes a mental stimulus of the highest order, and as we find it exerting its influence in other directions,

so in the development of the religious sense it has always held a conspicuous place. It has led to the objective expression of that sense under visible forms, in images, pictures, sacred structures, symbolic colours and shapes, and natural substances.

This expression, universal in primitive conditions, is called fetishism, polytheism, and idolatry, the worship of stocks and stones. But I wish to impress upon you that nowhere in the world did man ever worship a stock or a stone, as such. Every fetish, be it a rag-baby or a pebble from the roadside, is adored, not as itself, but as possessing some mysterious, transcendental power, by which it can influence the future. In some obscure way it is the medium or agent of that supernatural Will, the recognition of which is at the basis of every religion.

The relation of the fetish to the spiritual power behind it, though everywhere recognised, was not easy to define. The Melanesians believe that the souls of the dead act through bones; while the independent spirits (*vui*) choose stones as their mediums; and they say that these objects are, as it were, limbs or members of these incorporeal powers.*

That the fetish itself is something else than the

* Codrington in *Jour. Anthrop. Soc.*, vol. x., p. 285.

mere object, and is certainly not identified with it (as writers have often asserted), is evident from the words and actions of fetish worshippers. A South African negro offered food to a tree in the presence of an European traveller. The latter observed that a tree cannot eat. "Oh," replied the negro, "tree not fetish. Fetish spirit; not seen; live in tree." *

If a fetish does not bring good luck, it is thrown away, burned, or broken, as having lost its virtue, ceased to be the abode of power. One of efficacy, on the other hand, will bring a good price, and such are often sold and bought. Among the Papuans of New Guinea the fetishes are small wooden dolls dressed in coloured rags. They are believed to be the media through which the ancestral spirits operate. But if a man has bad luck, he will beat, or break, or cast away, as of no account, such an impotent object. †

These and scores of other examples which could be adduced disprove the assertion that man, even in his lowest phases of religious life, ever worshipped an object as an object. Even then, his intellectual insight penetrated to the recognition of something higher than phenomena in the world about him. As has been well said by a German writer, what is really

* Waitz, *Anthropologie der Naturvölker*, Bd. ii., p. 188.
† Von Hasselt, in *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, Bd. viii., p. 196.

worshipped in the object anywhere is not itself but "a transcendental *x*," within and beyond it.*

It has been abundantly shown that amid the tribes of the West Coast of Africa, to whose gods the term fetish, *feitiço*, was first applied by the Portuguese, the recognition and worship of tribal and national divinities and even of a Supreme Being, ruler and creator of the world, are clearly displayed.†

The house of cards therefore, erected by Auguste Comte, to represent the religious progress of the race, the first floor of which was fetishism, the second polytheism, and the third monotheism, falls helplessly to the ground.

There is no real distinction between fetishism and idolatry, unless we choose to say that the latter refers to the worship of objects artificially shaped; but many fetishes are so likewise.

Nor can we say, with Professor Rialle, that fetishism confounds the unseen agent with the thing itself, while the idolatry of developed polytheism regards the agent as something exterior to the object, an independent existence.‡ For not only does fetishism

* J. G. Pfleiderer, *Die Genesis des Mythus der Indogermanischen Völker*, p. 48.

† References in Pietschmann, *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, Bd. x., p. 159, who points out that fetishism should be, as a term, confined to the cult and not applied to the content of a religion.

‡ Rialle, *La Mythologie Comparée*, ch. i.

recognise the power of the supernatural outside of all objects, but the idols of polytheism are unquestionably just as holy, just as much limbs of the gods, as the dolls of the Melanesians.

We cannot even take fetishism as a special form of the cult or external worship; for it goes hand in hand with every phase of objective religion. It is quite as prevalent now, in proportion to the general strength of the religious sentiment, as it ever was, and is visible in the sacredness which all sects of the highest religions attach to certain objects and places. When the Christian touches the bone of a saint that he may be healed of an infirmity, or when he speaks of his church edifice as "the house of God," or when he packs in his trunk a Bible "for luck's sake," he is as much a fetish worshipper as the negro *caboceer* who collects around him a thousand pieces of rubbish because he thinks they have brought him good fortune.*

Modern folk-lore is full of fetishism, and it is a development of the religious sentiment which flourishes in all times and climes. Amulets, charms, lucky

* Prof. Granger remarks that "the influence of the fetish is interpreted as a kind of life of which the fetish is the seat."—*Worship of the Romans*, p. 201. Bastian defines it as "an incorporation of a subjective emotional state," and his disciple Achelis recognises that it is not a stadium of religious development. See his *Moderne Völkerkunde*, p. 366.

stones, everything that we now call by the familiar term of *mascot*, partakes of the nature of a fetish. Through some fancied potency, not to be found among its physical qualities, it is believed to bring us good fortune.

Nor is it a distinctive character of fetish worship, as has been maintained by some, that in it compulsion or constraint is endeavoured to be exercised on the gods to force them to be favourable and exert their power in aid of the supplicant. The earliest prayers are not of this character, as I showed in my last lecture; and, on the other hand, the notion of constraining the gods extended widely in higher religions and, indeed, probably in a metaphysical sense, was taught by the founder of Christianity himself, as in the parable of the unjust judge.

As there is nothing deeper than an external distinction between fetishism and idolatry, so there is no special form of religious thought which expresses itself as what has been called by Dr. Tylor, "animism," the belief that inanimate objects are animated and possess souls or spirits. This opinion, which in one guise or another, is common to all religions and many philosophies, is merely a secondary phenomenon of the religious sentiment, and not a trait characteristic of primitive faiths. The idea of the World-Soul, manifesting itself individually in every

form of matter from the star to the clod, is as truly the belief of the Sioux Indian or the Fijian cannibal, as it was of Spinoza or Giordano Bruno.*

This vague and universal divine potency extends through all nature, organic and inorganic, expressing itself in personality wherever separateness, oneness, is visible. Not merely did animals and trees share in the World-soul, but every object whatever. With the American Indians, the commonest sticks and stones, even the household vessel fashioned out of clay, or the hollowed stone on which the maize was pounded, had its spiritual essence, which might speak, act, and require to be venerated.† The Vitian Islanders held that each cocoanut had its own spirit, and occasionally many cocoanuts assembled for a jollification, at which times the joyous cracking of their sides kept the natives awake! ‡

But no error would be greater than to confound this with a veneration of such objects in themselves.

To the mind of the savage, whatever displayed movement, emitted sound or odour, or by its de-

* The insufficiency of animism as a theory of primitive religions has been previously urged by Van Ende, *Histoire Naturelle de la Croyance*, p. 21. Like fetishism and shamanism, animism should be regarded, not as a form or stadium of religion, but, to use Castren's excellent expression, "nur ein Moment in der Götterlehre." *Finnische Mythologie*, Einleitung.

† Dorsey, *Siouan Cults*, p. 433 ; the *Popol Vuh*, *passim*.

‡ Hale, *Ethnog. and Philol. of the U. S. Exploring Expd.*, p. 55.

fined limits and form indicated unity, was to him a manifestation in personality of that impersonal, spiritual Power of which he felt himself but one of the expressions. All other expressions shared his powers, and did not, in essence, differ from him. The brute, the plant, the stone, the wandering orbs of night, the howling wind, the crackling fire, the towering hill, all were his fellow-creatures, inspired by the same life as himself, drawing it from the same universal font of life.

It is not without reason, therefore, that the undeveloped religious longings ask for something concrete to represent divinity. Through its visible and audible traits the power of the Unseen Ruler is brought sharply to the consciousness. We sympathise even with the poor Oraons of Bengal, who, seeing nothing nobler to embody the divine, place a ploughshare on their altar as the object of adoration.*

Although in the limitless field of his religious insight everything in nature was to him a manifestation of divinity, primitive man everywhere indicated a preference for certain objects and groups of objects, evidently led to single them out on account of the strength or frequency of the appeals they make to his senses of sight and hearing.

* E. T. Dalton, *Ethnology of Bengal*, p. 258.

With the utmost brevity I will enumerate the most important of these groups, and endeavour at the same time to point out why they were everywhere selected to convey conceptions of the nature and attributes of God.

1. The Celestial Bodies.—The first group that I shall mention is that of the Celestial Bodies, the Sun, Moon, and Stars. The traits which connected them with the ideas of the divine are almost too obvious to require mention. They are bringers of light and warmth, they define the momentous change of day and night, their motions usher in the seasons and mark the progress of time. They are remote, aloft, inscrutable, dwellers in a realm which man may distantly perceive but never enter.

So much has been written of solar myths and star worship that every reader is aware of their practical universality among early nations. It is probable that the division of our week into seven days arose either from the dedication of one to each of the seven greatest luminaries or to a division of the moon's apparent course into four parts. Judicial astrology, which is not yet wholly dead, always maintained that the nativities were decided by the position of the stars.

All such survivals carry us back to primitive religions in which the astral bodies were prominent

figures in the cult. Many writers have maintained that the American Indians from north to south were always and mainly sun-worshippers. Though this is too hasty a statement, everyone will acknowledge that the sun is ever a conspicuous figure in their myths and rites. So it is among the Polynesians and Africans, and so we find it in the early forms of Aryan, Semitic, and Egyptian belief.

It is at first sight strange that in many mythologies the moon plays a more important rôle than the sun. But if we reflect that the night is the time when spirits walk abroad ; when sounds strike the ear with mysterious notes ; when nocturnal birds and beasts stir the senses with strange cries ; when, on the other hand, the cooling zephyrs and soft moonlight bring sweet ease, and the gentle dews refresh the parched leaves ; then we can understand why, both in modern folk-lore* and in primitive myths, the moon and the stars are often far more conspicuous than the flaming sun. The night, in fact, draws the veil from the spiritual world ; as has been said so beautifully by Shelley :

" As if yet around her he lingering were,
Though the *veil of daylight* concealed him from her."

*See remarks of W. W. Newell in his introduction to Fanny D. Bergen, *Current Superstitions* (*Mems. Amer. Folk-lore Society*, vol. iv.).

A few examples will illustrate this: The Dieyeris of Australia believe that man and all other beings were created by the moon. In many American languages the moon is regarded as male and the sun is referred to as "his companion." The Ipurinas, a Brazilian tribe, address the orb as "Our Father," and imagine him a little old man who was their ancestor and still watches over their prosperity. In like manner the eastern Eskimos say that their ancestors came from the moon to the earth. With the rude tribes of southern Borneo it is stated that the veneration of the moon forms the chief basis of their worship and myths.*

I can but refer to the lesser luminaries of the night. The stars have at all times been associated with religious meditations. The various constellations are familiar to most primitive peoples and are personified under living forms. Widely in South America and Polynesia the Pleiades enjoyed an especial homage, as marking the advent of the seasons and as con-

* Klemm, *Culturgeschichte*, Bd. ii., s. 316; Ling Roth, *Natives of Sarawak*, vol. ii., App., p. cxcviii.; Brinton, *Myths of the New World*, p. 154; Curr, *The Australian Race*, vol. ii., p. 48. The moon was sacred to Tina, the chief god of the Etruscans. Müller, *Die Etrusker*, Bd. ii., p. 43. Nĕ dîdâ, better known as Dido, has been identified with the moon as the leading deity of the Carthaginians and Phœnicians. Otto Meltzer, *Geschichte der Karthager*, Bd. i., s. 128. Danu, the goddess who presided over the Irish pantheon, the *tuatha de Danann*, was the moon (from *daon*, to rise).

nected with the production of vegetable life. In Peru they were styled the gods of rains; and the natives of the Gulf of California venerated them to that degree that even to look at them heedlessly was deemed calamitous; while some Australians held that it was from them that fire first descended to the world.* In such remote districts as Australia and Greenland the Milky-way was regarded as the path by which the souls ascended to their homes in the sky. In the one land the Aurora Australis, in the other the Aurora Borealis, was looked upon as the dance of the gods across the star-lit vault. Indeed, the study of the stellar bodies and the definition of their periodical appearance date directly to the veneration they excited in religious minds.

2. The Four Elements.—The simple theory that the world is composed of four elements, fire, water, air, and earth, is one which presents itself so naturally to primitive thought that traces of it can be seen in most mythologies which have passed beyond the rudimentary forms.

Each of these elements has its own group of religious associations, and they present themselves with that uniformity which we find so universal in religious expression, to be explained, as I have so

*Montesinos, *Ancien Perou*, p. 17; Venegas, *Hist of California*, p. 107; Smyth, *Aborigines of Victoria*, vol. i., p. 459.

often said, by the identity everywhere of the psychic sources of religion.

Perhaps the earliest of all the elements to receive this adoration was *fire*. With its discovery man first entered into human social life. Everywhere and in all peoples it has been in a manner sacred. With the Kafirs every religious ceremony must be performed in front of a fire.* In the Rig Veda the crackling of the blazing twigs is regarded as the speech of the gods, just as it is to-day in Borneo. The institutions of the sacred fire and the perpetual fire recur in every continent, and we have but to enter a church of the Roman communion on the morning of Holy Saturday to witness the impressive ceremonies with which the creation of the "new fire" is to this day celebrated in our midst. The custom of passing an infant "through the fire" was as much practised by the Aztecs in Mexico as by the Moloch worshippers of Syria.† The Peruvians held that divine inspiration was to be obtained by sacrifices to the god of fire; and those of Guatemala adored it as their greatest and oldest deity. ‡

In all these and in a hundred other examples which I might cite, the main thought is that in fire

* Brincker in *Globus*, Bd. lxviii., p. 97.

† Martin de Leon, *Camino del Cielo*, fol. 101.

‡ Montesinos, *Ancien Perou*, pp. 14–16; Ximenes, *Origen de los Indios de Guatemala*, p. 157.

and its products—warmth, heat, light, flame—lies the essential principle of life; and the worship of Life was the central, positive conception in primitive ceremonies.

The *air* to early man is recognised in motion as the winds; and these, in his myths and rites, occupy a conspicuous position. Conceived as four, blowing more or less directly from the four corners of the earth-plane, they are the rain-bringers, the gods of the seasons and the year, controlling the products of the harvest and hence the happiness and life of man. The outlines of the story are the same whether we listen to the Maoris of New Zealand, who tell us of Tawhiri-matea, god of the winds, who divided his progeny into four broods and sent one to each quarter of the compass; to the Eskimos, who narrate just the same of Sillam Innua, owner of the winds, and his four sons; or to a score of like myths which I could quote from American storyland.*

The house of the winds, where they are imagined to be stored, a mythical notion which Professor Schwartz has shown to be so wide-spread in the Old World, recurs with scarcely less frequency in the New World. †

* Sir George Grey, *Polynesian Mythology*, p. 5; Egede, *Nachrichten von Grönland*, s. 137.

† *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, Bd. ix. The Eskimo called it ***Sillam Eipane***, winds-house. Egede, *u. s.*

Water, as moisture, the dew, the fertilising showers, the green bordered streams and lakes, was ever connected with vegetable life and its symbols. In most cosmogonies the land rose from the bosom of some primal sea; in most primitive geographies the solid earth is surrounded by the mighty ocean-stream which stretches out to the uttermost space.

"All of us," said the Aztecs, "are children of water." Hence the spring, the stream, the lake, was ever regarded as a beneficent being, who should rightly call for the adoration of the true in soul. Tlaloc, god of rains, and the many-named gods of the heavenly vase in which the rains were stored on high, were conspicuous figures in the American pantheon.*

Virgil speaks of "Oceanus, *pater rerum*"; and in the Finnish epic, the Kalewala, it reads: "Three infants came forth from the same womb; water the oldest, fire the youngest, and iron between them."†

Water also entered into numberless rites of purification, of penitence, and sanctification.‡ Baptism

* The urn or vase was, in classical antiquity, the emblem of the fecundating waters (Guigniaut, *Religions de l'Antiquité*, tom. i., p. 509). Vases full of water were interred with the dead in Peru to symbolise the life beyond. Meyen, *Die Ureinwohner von Peru*, p. 29.

† *Kalewala*, Runa iv.

‡ Probably for this reason the ceremonial law of the Bushmen, especially that relating to puberty and marriage, enjoins "to avoid the wrath of the Water." Bleek, *Bushman Folk-lore*, p. 18.

by sprinkling or immersion belongs to the most ancient sacred rites; and the use of the fluid in divination, lustration, and libation was world-wide.

The most venerable god of Chaldean mythology was Êa, lord of the *earth* and "the waters under the earth." He was the deity in whose gift were the harvest, the germination of seeds, the fertility of the soil. Extending the idea to embrace all life, the Aztecs worshipped the earth as Tonantzin, Our Beloved Mother, and the Peruvians as Mama Cocha, Mother Earth. From her womb, said they, do all that live proceed, and to her silent breast will all again return. Far below her opaque surface is the realm which the sun lights at night, the abode of happy souls, said the Aztecs, ruled by the clement Quetzalcoatl, who there abides until the time fixed for his return to men.

From beneath the earth, repeat a hundred mythologies, did the first of men emerge seeking the light above but losing the joy below. So that in such distant points as Kamtschatka and the Andaman Islands we meet the same prophetic myth that at the end of the world the present earth will be turned upside down, and its then inhabitants will rejoice in the perennial warmth and light of the happier underworld.*

* Compare Klemm, *Culturgeschichte*, Bd. ii., s. 315 (after Steller), with Man, in *Jour. Anthrop. Soc.*, vol. xii., p. 163.

Intimately associated with the worship of the four elements, and also with the myths of the cosmical concepts, we trace through primitive religions the sacredness and symbolism of *colours*. Everywhere, in all cults, they are connected with certain trains of religious thoughts, certain expressions of religious emotions, though by no means always the same. But I can only refer, in passing, to this extended subject, which has not yet received the psychologic analysis which its importance demands.*

3. Stones and Rocks.—When we turn from these universal elements, which we can readily conceive portrayed with some commensurate greatness the idea of the supernatural, to such a gross and material object as a *stone*, a common stone or rock, it is at first difficult to understand its wide-spread acceptance as a symbol of the divine. But if we reflect on its hardness and durability, on its colour and lustre, and on the strange shapes in which it is found, we can see why it was so chosen.

In the early Semitic records we often read of Beth-el, the House of God. This was usually no-

* The specific effect of certain colours on the sub-consciousness, and thus on the religious emotions, is practically recognised in sacred art; but so far as I know this has not been made a subject of study by the experimental psychologist. Allowance must always be made for association of ideas; as when the Mozambique negroes paint the images of their bad spirits white, on account of their hatred of Europeans!

thing but an amorphous stone, which the god was supposed to inhabit. The holy Kaaba of Mahometanism is no doubt such an one, a rough, black piece of rock. The sacred image of Diana of the Ephesians was nothing more, and the Latin father Arnobius tells us that the image of earth, the Great Mother, brought to Rome from Phrygia with sumptuous pomp, was merely "a small black stone, rough and unhewn." *

To this instance, where the stone represents the Earth as the common mother, we find many exact parallels in savage faiths. In the Tahitian myths, *Papa*, Rock, was the name of the wife of the first man, mother of the race of men, and under this form she was adored.† The Zulus considered certain stones as sacred, because from one such, which split in two, their ancestors emerged. Their neighbours, the Basutos, entertain the same notion of a spheroidal granite boulder in their country, and their worship of it consists in dancing around it and spitting at it. The Indians of Colombia asserted that all men were once stones, and all will again become such. ‡ Those of Guatemala were wont to place a small polished stone in the mouth of the dying to

* Arnobius, *Adversus Gentes*, lib. vii., cap. 49.

† Fornander, *The Polynesian Race*, *u. s.*; Hale, *Ethnog. and Philol.*, p. 25.

‡ Calloway, *Relig. System of the Amazulus*, p. 34; Hahn, *Tsuni ǁGoam*, p. 91; Garcia, *Origen de los Indios*, lib. iv., cap. 26.

receive the soul, and thus supply it with a permanent abode.

The most common of mascots is a "lucky stone," and this goes back to the time when such was the favourite material for household fetishes. To this day the Canaras of India believe that the Bhutas, or familiar spirits, inhabit rough stones, and in Melanesia similar stones are held to be the abode of the *vui* or demonic intelligences.*

Another source of the sacredness of stones was their identification as "thunderbolts." Certain ones were believed to be the missiles hurled from the sky by the Thunder God in the lightning flash; though the Peruvians had the prettier belief that, as the product of the heavenly fire, they must retain its ardency, and therefore used them as love charms.† Flint, which when struck with a bit of pyrites emits a spark, and meteoric stones were especially recognised by these marks as of celestial origin.

Such a flint stone, say the legends of the Nahuas, in the beginning of the world fell from heaven to earth; as it broke to pieces each fragment rose to life as a demi-god. All men, added the Mexicans, came originally from such stones.‡

* *Jour. Anthrop. Inst.*, vols. v., p. 412, x., p. 280.

† They were called *huacanqui*. Montesinos, *Mems. Hist. sur l'ancien Perou*, p. 161.

‡ Garcia, *Origen de los Indios*, lib. iv., cap. 26; Torquemada, *Monarquia Indiana*, lib. vi., cap. 41.

Yet another origin of god-stones was the custom of erecting them as monuments of the dead. We can see this in its simplicity in Southern Polynesia. When a chief dies, a coral slab about three feet long is placed erect over his grave—a tombstone, in other words. This is decked with flowers and garlands, food is offered it, and invocations pronounced before it, precisely as to a divinity. This is because the spirit of the departed chief is believed to dwell within it.*

It was equally sacred when the stone was a mere cenotaph erected in memory of a departed chief or saint. Such are found in all lands and in all cults. They are the *menhirs* of the Celts, and the grave-stones of the Koders of India, often painted in strong colours. †

Certain stones, especially those we call "precious," the gems, have physical traits of transparency, lustre, and colour, which have ever made them prized, and led to the belief that they exercise peculiar powers on the mind.

Throughout Asia and America the varieties of jade or nephrite, a greenish, semi-translucent mineral, has had a wide-spread reputation for sacred meaning and magical potency. The *chalchiuhite* of the Mexi-

* Hale, *Ethnog. and Philol. of the U. S. Explor. Exped.*, p. 97.
† Hopkins, *Religions of India*, p. 97.

cans, small green stones, believed to control the weather and representative of the goddess of the waters and the rains, were of this material.

By attentively gazing into the transparency of a quartz crystal, the Maya shaman of Yucatan still believes that he will see in its depths, unfolded by the god whose dwelling it is, the picture of the future and the decrees of fate.

4. Trees and Plants.—Primitive man was arboreal. A hollow tree was his home, its branches his place of refuge, its fruit his sustenance. Naturally the tree became associated with his earliest religious thoughts. It represented his protecting deity. He would not willingly injure it. When the Mandans cut a pole for their tents, they swath it in bandages so that its pain may be allayed. The Hidatsas would not cut down a large cottonwood tree, because it guarded their tribe. The Algonquins decked an old oak with offerings suspended to its branches, for the same reason.*

Trees from their dripping foliage, and because their shade was associated with the grey of a cloudy day, were believed to make the rains and thus to refresh the fields and fertilise the seeds of the vegetable world. The step was easily taken to extend

* Clark, *Indian Sign Language*, p. 241 ; Matthews, *Ethnog. of the Hidatsa*, p. 48, etc.

this to all germs, animal as well as vegetable. Thus the tree came to symbolise the source of Life, and to represent both the clouds and rains and the fatherhood of men and brutes. It could cause flocks to multiply and the barren womb to conceive.*

Among the Mexicans, the tree was invoked as Tota, "Our Father," and was spoken of as god of the waters and the green foliage. Some particular species was chosen as the totem of various American gentes, and in the earliest legends of Greece and Persia sundry famous families traced their descent from a tree.

These ideas led to the mythical association of the tree with the origin of life, and with various objective expressions of this in the cult.

In most American stories where we hear of the first of men emerging from the under-world, it is by climbing a tree. This tree also supports the sky, and is so represented in the native books of the Mayas and Nahuas.† The Yurucares of Bolivia relate that their god Tiri, when he would people the earth with men, cleft a tree, and from the opening came forth the various tribes of the world. ‡

* See Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, *passim*.

† See, for illustrative examples, my *Primer of Mayan Hieroglyphics*, p. 49, etc.; and comp. Keary, *Outlines of Primitive Belief*, p. 63, *sq*.

‡ A. d'Orbigny, *L'Homme Américain*, tome ii., p. 365.

When the tree was not worshipped as itself, but under a symbolic form, this was usually as the sacred pole or the cross.

The sacred pole was found widely among the American Indians. It was planted in the centre of their villages, or, if the tribe was nomadic, it was carried about in an ark or wrapping and set up in a tent by itself in their encampment. It typified the communal life of the tribe and represented the "mystery tree," which was intimately associated in their legendary origin.*

In early art the cross as a sacred design is often derived from the conventional figure of a tree, and symbolises the force of life, the four winds, the rain, and the waters. This is notably the case in Mexico and Central America, where we have abundant testimony that this is the origin and meaning of the cross-symbol so frequent on their monuments.

The sacred tree is a conspicuous figure in the earliest bas-reliefs of the Chaldeans. It is often represented in a cruciform shape, and frequently a winged seraph is holding up to it a pine cone, the fruit of the sacred cedar, either as an emblem of fertility, or, more likely, as an aspergillum, with which

* Dorsey, *Siouan Cults*, pp. 390, 455 ; Alice C. Fletcher in *Proc. Amer. Assoc. Adv. Science*, 1895 and 1896 ; Brinton, *Myths of New World*, pp. 118, 119, and *Nagualism*, pp. 42, 47, 48.

to bedew it from the holy water, which is carried in a bucket in the other hand.*

That a tree is a "thing of life" it is hard for us even yet to doubt, and we can scarcely avoid being attracted by Fechner's pleasing theories of a "plant-soul."† The sound of the wind in the leaves, rising from the softest of mystic whispers to the roaring of the wild blast, seems to proceed from some mind or spirit. The Australians say that these are the voices of the ghosts of the dead, communing one with another, or warning the living of what is to come. They and other tribes also believe that it is through understanding this mysterious language that the "doctors," or shamans, communicate with the world of spirits and derive their supernatural knowledge.‡ Hence we can easily see arose the myth of "the tree of knowledge," which we find in the earliest Semitic annals and monuments. It belonged to the same species as the oracular oak of Zeus at Dodona, and the laurel of Apollo at Delphi, from the whispers of whose leaves the sibyls interpreted the sayings of the gods.

* As suggested by E. Bonavia, *Flora of the Assyrian Monuments* (1894). This is a more likely interpretation than that of Dr. Tylor, that the conical object is the inflorescence of the male date palm; as it is in some bas-reliefs shown presented toward a city gate, a person, etc.

† Fechner, *Nana, oder das Seelenleben der Pflanze.*

‡ Curr, *The Australian Race*, vol. ii., p. 199; Palmer in *Jour. Anthrop. Inst.*, vol. xiii., p. 292.

Not only was a tree the earliest house of man, it was also his first temple. That very word "temple" bears witness to the fact, for it is from the Greek τέμενος, a sacred grove set apart as a place of worship. The aspiring lines of Gothic cathedrals simulate the trunks of slender and majestic trees carrying the eye and the soul aloft, and by their overreaching limbs shutting out the glare of day, thus leading the mind to holy meditation. Tacitus describes the Germans as building no temples, but worshipping their mysterious divinity, *secretum illud*, in the gloom of the forest.

5. *Places and Sites.*—Early man stays close to the soil. It is proved, by the distribution of the oldest stone implements, that primitive tribes were not generally migratory, and had little intercourse with their neighbours. Hence the more closely did they study their immediate surroundings; and a spot which was marked by some peculiar feature was soon associated with their all-permeating religious notions, and was deemed sacred.

These features can usually be easily recognised. A spring, well, or fountain, where from dry earth, or out of the rock, pours forth the crystal fluid on which depends the life of man and brute and plant, was everywhere a holy spot. The brook which flowed from it, chattering its endless tale among the

pebbles, was scarcely less so. It was directly said and oft repeated by the Greeks that the *manteia*, the holy inspiration, was imparted at the fountain of Parnassus or at the Pierian spring. The Moxos of Bolivia claim descent from the stream on which their villages are situated, a more than figurative expression of their dependence on it for food and drink.*

The sacred character of "high places," such as hills, mountains, or elevated plateaux, is intimately connected with the universal belief in "the Father in Heaven," the sky as the home and the throne of the greatest divinities. I have already referred to the terrestrial "Hills of Heaven," located, as a rule, within the tribal area. †

A high hill or mountain, regarded by itself as a personality, would justly be looked upon as of extraordinary might, and invoked as a potent aid in the undertakings of life. In the invocations of the Quiches of Central America, who live in the midst of lofty peaks, over one hundred of them are named and implored for aid. The "Heart of the Hills" is the title which the ancient Mexicans applied to one of their greatest gods.

* A. d'Orbigny, *L'Homme Américain*, tom. i., p. 240.

† A careful discussion of "Höhencultus," by Baron von Andrian, may be found in the *Bericht der Deutschen Anthrop. Gesellschaft*, August, 1889. He believes the earliest form to have been that of the individualised height; later, that of its cosmic relations.

A third and important trait which gave them sacredness is the strength of the echo which is returned from their narrow gorges or precipitous sides. Mountain worship is very generally oracular in character. Classical and familiar examples of this are the Pythoness and the Roman Sibyl.

Mountain caves are natural temples, and as the cave, like the hollow tree, is a ready-built house for the wandering savage, so it is also marvellously adapted to his ends as a shrine. Throughout Mexico and Central America we find the caves chosen as the temples of the mightiest deities and the depositories of the holiest relics.*

The sacredness of some spots arose from their adaptation to certain rites, religious or magical. Thus, for the haruspices to practise their specialty in divination, they must choose a spot where they could watch the flight of birds. The sacrifices to the god of heaven should be under the open sky, and the Mayas of Yucatan believed that when the sun was in the zenith and the sacred fire was kindled beneath it, the ineffable Deity descended in the form of a bright plumaged *ara* and partook of the offering.

Places of this kind were of course laid under *tabu*, and thus reserved for their sacred uses only. Some-

*On the Mexican cave-god, Oztoteotl, see my *Nagualism*, pp. 38–41.

times they were enclosed, but often the community was sufficiently informed about them to make this unnecessary.

The fame of these sacred places and the powers of the gods who dwelt within them extended widely even in very primitive conditions. This gave rise to the custom of pilgrimages, quite as familiar to the American Indians before Columbus as to the Europeans of the Middle Ages. There were famous holy places on the island of Cozumel and in Colombia and Peru, to which pious palmers wended their way over many hundred miles of weary journeying.

The local divinity naturally drew his colouring and his main attributes from the spot itself, and those in turn gave a similar local physiognomy to his rites and functions. We have thus a kind of geographical character impressed on early religions, which their later developments retained long after they had been severed from their first meanings and had drifted to other climes and alien races.

6. The Lower Animals.—The primitive mind did not recognise any deep distinction between the lower animals and man. The savage knew that the beast was his superior in many points, in craft and strength, in fleetness and intuition, and he regarded it with respect. To him, the brute had a soul not inferior to his own, and a language which the wise among

men might on occasion learn. The strange powers and mysterious faculties they often possess were to him inexplicable by any other doctrine than that they were divine; therefore, with wide unanimity, he placed certain species of animals nearer to God than is man himself, or even identified them with the manifestations of the Highest.

None was in this respect a greater favourite than the bird. Its soaring flight, its strange or sweet notes, the marked hues of its plumage, combined to render it a fit emblem of power and beauty.

The Dyaks of Borneo trace their descent to Singalang Burong, the god of birds; and birds as the ancestors of the totemic family are extremely common among the American Indians. The Eskimos say that they have the faculty of soul or life beyond all other creatures, and in most primitive tribes they have been regarded as the messengers of the divine and the special purveyors of the vital principle.

According to the myths of the Polynesians, the gods in the old times used to speak to man through the carols of the feathered songsters; and everywhere, to be able to understand the language of birds was equivalent to being able to converse with the gods.

The chief god of the Murray River Australians

was Nourali. He was immortal, self-created, and the creator of all. The form under which they conceived him was that of a bird, a crow or eagle. Among nearly all the tribes of the North-west Coast and the adjacent interior of British America, the creation of the world is attributed to a raven, Yetl, who is personated in the dark thunder-cloud.

South of them, in the wide-spread Algonquin stock, this "thunder-bird" is a conspicuous figure in art and myth; and we could pursue our way quite to the extreme south of the continent, and everywhere among the aboriginal tribes we should discover similar sacred associations connected with the birds.

They are universal in religions, and those which we meet in Christian art, the eagle, the dove, etc., carry with them significations allied to those they bear in earlier and primitive symbolism.*

Closely connected with these ideas was the reverence of the egg as the symbol of the origin of life. Plutarch tells us that in the Bacchic mysteries the egg represented matter in its germinal condition, that is, the potentiality of life; and this meaning we have retained with the symbol in our customs relating to Easter eggs on the morning of the Resurrection.

The derivation from the observation of the bird brooding on its nest is obvious, and no wonder there-

* Walcott, *Sacred Archæology*, pp. 233, 236, etc.

fore that the symbol with allied myths and rites extends through all religions.

In the creation legend of the Yaros, a Dravida tribe of Northern India, the goddess Nustoo, who created the world, came into life from a self-evolved egg, and dwelt on the petals of a water-lily until she had formed and moulded the land for her abode. The Dyaks of Borneo relate that after the Supreme Being had created the world, the god Ranying descended to the new earth and formed there seven eggs, which contained the germs of man and woman, all animals and plants.*

This example, of the bird, which I have given in some detail, will illustrate the cult of an animal form. It by no means stands alone in its universality. Perhaps even more striking is the so-called "serpent-worship," which has occupied the attention of so many writers. The adoration of the serpent-symbol is wonderfully wide-spread. Scarcely a native tribe can be named in regions where this animal is known, which does not pay it some sort of reverence. Some writers have traced the sentiment back to the anthropoid progenitor of man, supposed to dwell in tropical forests abounding in venomous snakes. But into this extensive question I cannot enter.

* Dalton, *Ethnology of Bengal*, p. 59; Ling Roth, *Natives of Sarawak*, vol. ii., App., p. clxx.

The symbolic value of most animal deities can be traced to some peculiar trait of the species. Thus the lizard, very prominent in the religions of Polynesia, Australia, and South Africa, derived its significance from the nocturnal habits of some species and the diurnal habits of others.* In America, the frog was the symbol of water, over a vast area; and that it has precisely the same meaning in Australia, will cause no astonishment when we recall its amphibious nature. The fish, as the emblem of life, familiar in Christian symbolism, dates back to earliest Chaldean times, when Oannes, a form of the god Êa, appeared as half fish and half man, and is a parallel of the fish-god who sows the seed of man in the flood myths of both the Brahmans and the Mexicans. It is but another expression of the recognition of water as the source or condition of life.

The totemic animals, or "eponymous ancestors," of the clans or gentes among the American Indians, are not to be taken literally. They were not understood as animals of the sort we see to-day, but as mythical, ancient beings, of supernatural attributes, who clothed themselves in those forms for their own purposes.

7. *Man.*—That when the brute was at times in-

* M. d' Estrey, in *L'Anthropologie*, tom. iii., pp. 712, *sq.*, has made an interesting study of the lizard symbol in Polynesia, to which much could be added from other fields of primitive life.

vested with the aureole of the Divine, man himself should at times partake of its glory, need be expected. But here let an important distinction be drawn. Never *as man* was he clothed in the attributes of Deity, but just in so far as he was deemed to be *more than man.* The Latin saying, *deus homini deus,* never was true anywhere in its literal sense. Anthropism never existed in any religion. Man or the likeness of man was never worshipped by reason of any human attribute, but solely for those believed to be more than human, superhuman.

The tribes of Polynesia did adore their chieftains; the ancient Egyptians and many another people did pay their rulers divine honour, and rank them among the gods; but always because they considered them partakers of the divine nature, sharers in that which is ever beyond mere humanity.*

This profound distinction between the human and the humanised divine was sought to be expressed by most tribes by fashioning the images of the gods in vaguely human shapes, but with non-human ele-

* As Keary well says: "The essence of primitive belief lies not in any likeness to humanity, but in differences from it." *Outlines of Prim. Belief*, p. 26. The Neo-Platonic doctrine of "emanation" led to the belief that a man might become so filled with the divine essence as to become divine himself. This was the claim of Simon the Magician, who "became confessedly a god to his silly followers," says Hippolytus in his *Refutation of all Heresies*, bk. vi., cap. 13.

ments. Diana with her hundred breasts, Brahma with his dozens of arms, Janus with his double face, and scores of other instances will at once rise in the memory. Enormous size, impossible features, accessories such as wings, tails, multiple heads and limbs, indicate not, as some would have it, a depraved artistic taste, but the effort of the pious carver to express in his work the non-human and superhuman character of the being he sets before the adoring eyes of the votaries.

It was only in a few gifted and glorious natures, notably the ancient Greeks, that the true distinction rose to full consciousness in the artistic soul—that in their corporeal forms the gods differ from men in their superior and matchless beauty, in their perfect symmetry and noble proportions. They recognised that there is something in beauty itself, which, in its highest expression, partakes truly and really of the divine, and leads man to the contemplation of laws beyond those of nature or of life, laws which are the expression of the deep harmonies of the universe.

This was the triumph of anthropomorphism. Pursuing the merely objective, the merely animal, it was led by the unseen hand which guides man to his destiny into the path which conducted far beyond what the senses can teach, into the realm of the ideal and the eternal, to

"the measures and the forms,
Which the abstract intelligence supplies,
Whose kingdom is where Time and Space are not."

Such are some of the numberless objects with which primitive man associated his idea of the Divine. The nature of this association must not be misunderstood. I repeat what I have already said, that it was not an identification of the spiritual with the material. The object was hallowed, not from anything in itself, but as the medium of invisible power.

8. Life and its Transmission.—What Professor Otfried Müller has so well said of the oldest forms of the Greek and Etruscan religions holds true in all primitive faiths: "To them, divinity seemed a world of Life, blossoming forth from an impenetrable depth into definite forms and individual expressions." * All gods and holy objects were merely vehicles through which Life and Power poured into the world from the inexhaustible and impersonal source of both.

I will illustrate this first from the very ancient religion of the Etruscans and then point out sufficient analogies in modern savage tribes.

That venerable people, whose massive cities built before Rome was founded still survive, held that

* *Die Etrusker*, Bd. ii., s. 111.

there was a single source of all existence, animate and inanimate. Its immediate agents were the mysterious "veiled gods," whose number was unknown and whose names were never uttered. They were the channels of the divine Will, through which it passed to the twelve highest known gods, called the *Consentes* or Companions, and these transmitted it through those innumerable spirits, whom the Latins called Genii, to its realisation in objective existence.

The word *genius* means a producer or begetter; but not in any literal sense, for not only every man and animate being had such a genius, but also every plant, every city, every place, every inanimate object, had one also. Clearly, therefore, the word refers to an act of the creative power in the abstract or spiritual sense. The genii were the proximate causes of existence, but they were themselves "emanations from the great gods," and these in turn were merely the channels of the inexhaustible source of all life beyond.

This was the doctrine of the Etruscans and also of the Greeks. I may compare it with the belief of one of the most brutish of barbarian hordes, the Itelmen of Kamtschatka.

Beyond all visible things, say they, is the ultimate Power, Dusdachtschish, invisible, remote. No worship and no offerings are tendered him other than

that certain pillars are erected and decked with flowers and garlands in his honour. Their Jupiter is Kutka. It was said of him that he had married all creatures and was the common father of all. It was he who made land and water in their present forms and invented all arts. To him the visible world owed its existence, though not its origin. Many discreditable stories were told of him, and he is as much cursed for the evils of life as praised for its advantages. It is he who finds souls for all existences, and preserves their spirits when the body decays.

We must not be blinded to the true significance of such myths by the often material, coarse, and vulgar images under which they are presented. Indeed, if they are properly comprehended, we may explain and redeem from obloquy much in the heathen legends which Arnobius* and other fathers of the Church denounced with bitter and vehement imprecation. We should consider whether they are not naïve symbols, chosen, with a crude innocence of evil, to convey objectively the idea of the eternally renewed life of nature.

This reflection will explain to us the true signi-

* Speaking of Jupiter, this fiery preacher exclaims: "Nor is there any kind of baseness in which you do not associate his name with passionate lusts."—*Adversus Gentes*, lib. v., cap. 22.

ficance of those objects from ancient and savage cults which are preserved in the locked rooms of museums, in their secret drawers and curtained cases. They are too apt to be construed as proofs of impurity and degradation. Such an interpretation would be sadly at variance with the fact.

There were, indeed, and often, licentious rites, deliberate indecencies, practised under the cloak of religion by unscrupulous rulers and debased priests. These were alienations and prostitutions of religion. In the genuine and primitive faiths, the symbols of the reproduction and transmission of life were frequent and public, and were not associated with thoughts or acts of debauchery. They were visible emblems of that Spirit of Life which, beyond all else, was the unifying instinct of religious expression.

This instinct led man everywhere to call upon God as Father, as parent of whatever is, "Pan-genitor," as he is styled in the Orphic hymns. In every race, in all ages, have men's prayers ascended to "Our Father who art in heaven."

Were we to listen to the rude Australian, we should hear him invoking *Papang*, "Father"; or *Mamin-gata*, or *Mungan-naur*, "Our Father," in his various dialects. Among the Aztecs of Mexico, it would be *To-ta*, "Our Father"; with the American tribes of the north, "grand-father," or "great

father"; in the Brahmānas of India, *Pita*, "Father"; with the Greeks and Romans, *Dios Pater*, "the heavenly Father"; and with the northern Vikings, *Odin All-father*.*

But a vital distinction has been claimed to exist between such terms and that fatherhood of God which we have been taught to acknowledge. "In heathen religions," asserts an eminent writer, "the fatherhood of the gods is physical fatherhood only"; and this is repeated by many Christian theologians and commentators.†

It is easy to refute this assertion. It would not have been made but for religious partisanship. Ethnologists are well aware that the word for "Father" in primitive life is much more frequently a term of respect, applied to elders, than necessarily denotive of kinship. The father, *Pita*, of the Brahmānas is at once the Creator, Preserver, and Destroyer of all things, and far remote from physical parentage‡; neither in American nor Australian myths is "the Father above" identified as the ancestor of the gens; among the Zulus, the best instructed missionaries report that Unkululu, the

* Howitt, in *Jour. Anthrop. Inst.*, vol. xiii., pp. 192, 194; vol. xiv., p. 313.

† Robertson Smith, *Religion of the Semites*, p. 41; Herzog und Plitt, *Real-Encyclopädie für Prot. Theologie*, *s. v.* Gebet, etc.

‡ Hopkins, *Religions of India*, p. 412.

"Father" of their creeds, was not meant literally so, but only as "the means of helping the race into being"*; and this is the general sense of the term in every instance which I have analysed.

As some sort of a crude effort to express this comprehensibly, we find that frequently in primitive myths and art the god, regarded as the creator, is shown or spoken of as "androgynous,"—that is, of both sexes at once. He is addressed as "father-mother," or "mother-father,"—bi-sexual rather than non-sexual in nature.† Such expressions are of constant occurrence, and some of the most objectionable portions of the ritual and of idolatrous art arose from the effort to translate this mystical characteristic into objective forms.

Yet it remains true that the sexual antithesis, that which mythologists call the worship of "the reciprocal principles of nature," is interwoven with the fibre of nearly all religions, primitive or devel-

* Calloway, *Religious System of the Amazulu*, p. 34.

† As examples, I may name Unkululu, among the Zulus (Calloway, *Relig. System of the Amazulu*, pp. 40, 43); Singbonga, of the Munga-Kohls (Jellinghaus, in *Zeit. für Ethnologie*, Bd. iii., p. 330); the Hunahpu of the Quiches (*Popol Vuh*, p. 1); the Ahsonnuth of the Navahoes (*8th Rep. Bur. Ethnol.*, p. 275); etc. I have discussed the psychic origin of androgynous deities in *The Religious Sentiment*, pp. 66, *sqq*. It was also strong in the early Christian Church, Origen and others of the fathers teaching that the Holy Ghost was the feminine principle in God (C. J. Wood, *Survivals in Christianity*, p. 63).

oped. Under one form or another, it is the impulse which ever appeals most potently to the human heart.

The sentiment which attracts the one sex to the other, the passion of Love, exceeds all others in the power it exerts on the individual life. This it is, which in some of its forms, rude or refined, is at the root of half the expressions of the religious sentiment. We may trace it from crude and coarse beginnings in the genesiac cults of primitive peoples, through ever nobler and more delicate expressions, up through the celibate sacrifices of both sexes, spouses of God,* until in its complete expansion it reaches the perfect *agape*, where the union of the human with the divine in the life eternal, here on earth, or beyond, one and the same, is believed to have been reached. †

This, the loftiest of all the religious mystical ideals is but the result of a gradual evolution from

* These were frequent in quite primitive faiths. Some of the priests of ancient Mexico, for example, wholly extirpated the genitalia.—Davila Padilla, *Hist. de la Prov. de Mexico*, lib. ii., cap. 88. Comp. Charlevoix, *Journal Historique*, p. 350.

† I have pointed out that in various American dialects, as the Chipeway and Cree, the Maya, Quichua, etc., there are words of native origin, which were used to convey the notion of the love of the gods in pure and high senses. See the article on "The Conception of Love in American Languages," in *Essays of an Americanist*, pp. 416, 421, 428, etc.

those low beginnings which I have mentioned as perceptible in most primitive religions.

It is the ripened manifestation of that profound psychical truth, so incomparably expressed in the lines of the philosopher-poet, Coleridge:

> "All thoughts, all passions, all delights,
> Whatever stirs this mortal frame,
> All are but ministers of Love,
> And feed his sacred flame."

LECTURE V.

Primitive Religious Expression: In the Rite.

CONTENTS:—The Ritual a Mimicry of the Gods—Magical Rites—Division of Rites into I. Communal, and II. Personal. I. Communal Rites: 1. The Assemblage—The Liturgy—2. The Festal Function—Joyous Character of Primitive Rites—Commensality—The "Ceremonial Circuit"—Masks and Dramas—3. The Sacrifice—Early and Later Forms—4. The Communion with God—Pagan Eucharists. II. Personal Rites: 1. Relating to Birth—Vows and Baptism—2. Relating to Naming—The Personal Name—3. Relating to Puberty—Initiation of Boys and Girls—4. Relating to Marriage—Marriage "by Capture" and "by Purchase"—5. Relating to Death—Early Cannibalism—Sepulchral Monuments—Funerary Ceremonies—Modes of Burial—Customs of Mourning.

WE have seen how the religious sentiment finds expression in the Word and in the Object. It remains to consider it as revealed in the Act. This is known as the Rite or the Ritual. It is a combination of forms and ceremonies collectively known as Worship.

So important is it that one eminent German authority has declared the ritual to be "the source of all religions"*; and Dr. W. Robertson Smith,

*Otto Gruppe, quoted by Schrader.

also a profound student of the subject, has maintained that "in the study of ancient religions we must begin, not with the myth, but with the ritual"; because, he adds, "in almost every case the myth was derived from the ritual, and not the ritual from the myth." *

If I do not follow these authorities, it is because my own studies have led me to a different opinion from theirs. I believe that every rite is originally based on a myth. In later days the myth was often obscured or lost, and another coined to explain the rite; and this second growth is what has misled the authors I have quoted.

The evidence which has convinced me is, that in truly primitive condition the rite is constantly a mimicry of the supposed doings of the god; or it is a means of summoning him according to accepted statements; or it is a method of communing with the Divine, plainly drawn from the facts of suggestion and sub-conscious mentality. Occasionally it is a magical procedure to constrain the deities; but this is rare in primitive conditions.†

The mimicry or imitative origin of rites is well

* *Religion of the Semites*, p. 18.

† The idea of mimicry survived long, and indeed still exists, in what is called "sympathetic magic"; when, for instance, to produce blindness in an enemy, an image is made of him and its eyes transfixed with thorns. Compare Lenormant, *Chaldean Magic*, p. 12.

illustrated in that in use for "rain-making," one of the commonest of all. In periods of drought, "The Indian rain-maker mounts to the roof of his hut, and rattling vigorously a dry gourd containing pebbles to represent the thunder, scatters water through a reed on the ground beneath, as he imagines up above in the clouds do the spirits of the storm."*

The Australian rite is analogous. The women of the tribe erect a hut of leaves and branches, in which are placed some stones. The men enter, and while some scatter bird's down in the air, others scarify their arms and let the blood drop upon the stones. These are then placed high up in trees, and the hut demolished. The symbolism is, that the hut represents the firmament; the down, the light cirrus clouds which precede the storm; the stones, the heavy rain-clouds; the dropping blood, the fertilising rain.† This is again an imitation of their myth of the making of rain by the celestial powers.

Very many rites are of this character. Others again are of the nature of an invitation to the divinity, based on beliefs and narratives of his supposed actions or customs. The Mayas of Yucatan, for instance, had a deity doubtless of solar character, who bore the name, "The Eye of the Day." The

* *Myths of the New World*, p. 17.

† Curr, *The Australian Race*, vol. ii., pp. 66, 67.

myth stated that his form was that of a bird of brilliant plumage, and that he was nearest the earth at high noon about the summer solstice. At that time, therefore, they constructed an altar in an open spot, built upon it a fire and placed the sacred offerings. The people then witnessed the gorgeous parrot, the sacred *ara*, descend through the air to take the offerings, who was none other than the god himself, responding to the invitation. *

The magical class of rites was common in the Orient. To this day in China it is believed that if a military camp be laid out in a particular form, and under the proper auspicious conditions, not only is it impregnable by foes, but neither gods nor demons can prevail against it. Many later rituals are thus magical, or have magical elements in them by the aid of which the celebrant claims to control the powers divine.

The Mexican Nagualist, or priest, for instance, after he has performed his magical rites and spoken the words of power, does not hesitate to shout: "Lo! I myself am here! I am most furious! I make the loudest noise! I respect no one! Even sticks and stones tremble before me! What god or mighty demon dares face me?" † Here, through

* Cogolludo, *Historia de Yucatan*, lib. iv., cap. viii.
† Brinton, *Nagualism*, p. 53.

the power of the rite, the celebrant has become as one of the gods themselves.

These examples further serve to illustrate a fundamental distinction in rites themselves. It has been well expressed by a German writer, Dr. Freihold, who has said that their tendencies point toward one of two aims, either to bring down the god to men, to have "God with us"; or, to elevate the man to God, to clothe him with supernatural powers. The one culminates in the epiphany, the other in the apotheosis. The writer quoted believes that this special culmination of one or the other of these tendencies is largely a matter of race, that it is an ethnic trait, and explains much otherwise obscure in the historical development of religions.*

Without entering into this interesting but too extensive inquiry, I will remark that these two tendencies run closely parallel to the division of rites which I shall adopt, a division based on a comparison of the large numbers which I have classified in the study of primitive religions.

This division is also twofold. It embraces, first, all those rites which are primarily intended for the benefit of the community; and, second, all those primarily intended for the benefit of the individual.

* Freihold, *Die Lebensgeschichte der Menschheit*, p. 134. His expressions are: 1. Das Menschenwerden des Göttlichen; and, 2. Die Vergötterung des Menschen.

The former I shall call *communal*, the latter, *personal* rites.

It is the more necessary that I shall insist on this distinction because it has been overlooked and even denied by some eminent scholars. Dr. Robertson Smith, for example, with whom I have been before compelled to disagree, refused to recognise personal worship in primitive conditions. He wrote thus: "It was the community and not the individual who was sure of the help of its deity." The individual, he adds, was obliged to have recourse to merely magical measures for his own protection.*

This statement is contradicted by nearly every primitive religion known to me; and it can be explained only by the concentration of the writer's mind on a faith so peculiar as that of the ancient Hebrews. †

I. THE COMMUNAL RITES, those for the benefit of the community, be it large or small, may be classed under four forms: 1, the assemblage; 2, the festal function; 3, the sacrifice; and 4, the communion with the Divine.

* *Religion of the Semites*, p. 263. This statement will also be considered in the sixth lecture of this series.

† Indeed, among the Patagonian Indians, according to a competent observer, there are no fixed religious ceremonies whatever, except those of a personal character, referring to births, marriages, deaths, etc.—George C. Musters, *Among the Patagonians*, chap. v.

1. The Assemblage.—Of these the *assemblage* should first be considered, as it is the necessary condition of all communal worship. The *ecclesia*, the meeting, the gathering together, the congregation, has a far higher importance than for the mere purpose of unity in an outward function. It is the means by which that most potent agent in religious life, *collective suggestion*, is brought to bear upon the mind. It has been instinctively recognised by every religion, and especially by mystical teachers, as an indispensable element in the dissemination of doctrine.

Strange, indeed, is the influence on the individual of "the crowd," when it is animated by deep feeling, by positive belief, by intense activity! It is difficult even for the calmest mind not to be thrilled with the contagious impulses of an assemblage tossed on the waves of wild religious emotion. Its vertiginous passion whirls those who yield to it out of themselves, beyond their senses, into some lofty, hyper-sensuous state, where reason totters and reality fades. We have but to watch an active "revival," or the hysterical outbursts of an old-fashioned "camp-meeting," to be convinced of this.

These effects are hastened and strengthened by the Liturgy, the responsive songs and chants, the music, the dancing hand in hand, the touch of flesh,

and the intoxication of breath with breath,—all that the theologians class as the *anaphora*, the going back and forth of mind and mind, through the varied forms of sensuous expression.*

All this is perfectly familiar to primitive religions. Among the rude tribes of our Western plains, the Dakotas and Chipeways for instance, thousands will gather at the annual festivals to unite in common worship and ceremonies. The first missionaries to Mexico report it a common sight to see six or seven thousand natives moving as one man in the swaying figures of the sacred dances; and it were easy to multiply examples. Everywhere was the religious value of worship in common recognised.

2. *The Festal Function.*—I have already referred to the fact that although the fear of demons and ghosts prevailed generally in early faiths, their prevailing character was by no means always gloomy.

In early conditions the public religious ceremonies have an atmosphere of joyousness about them. They are thanksgivings and merrymakings, such as still exist among us in pale survivals in our harvest homes, Christmas festivities, and Easter-tide amusements. In ancient Greek and Roman rites this is

* The anaphora, remarks the Rev. John M. Neale, in his *History of the Holy Eastern Church*, vol. ii., chap. i., has always been "by far the most important part" of the Christian liturgies. It recurs in nearly all primitive worship.

still more visible. "Worship the gods with a joyous heart," prescribes Cicero; and true to the precept, the Romans included among their acts of worship such cheering adjuncts as theatrical performances, horse races, games, and dancing girls. No sign of mourning was permitted, no word of lamentation was allowed, and a serene mood, a joyous countenance and bright garments were enjoined, that the gaiety of the occasion might not suffer diminution.*

There was nothing in this peculiar to the Romans. The same is well known to be true of the Greeks; Jacob Grimm is our authority that the religious rites of the ancient Germans were as a rule cheerful, and those which were most cheerful were "the earliest and the commonest"; while Robertson Smith testifies to the effect that the early Semitic ceremonies were likewise gay and festal, passing at times into a truly orgiastic character.†

Probably most of us will feel some surprise when this trait of early and heathen religions is pressed upon our attention. We have been accustomed to hear of their dark and cruel mysteries, their immolations and holocausts, their cries of anguish and blood-stained altars, until we have imagined that light-

* Granger, *Worship of the Romans*, pp. 272, 303, etc.

† Grimm, *Teutonic Mythology*, vol. i., p. 42; Robertson Smith, *Religion of the Semites*, p. 260; Payne Knight, *Ancient Art*, p. 50.

hearted gaiety was even farther from their teachings than it is from our own faith, whose cardinal principle is the holiness of suffering and self-abnegation.

Nothing could be wider from the truth. Probably the first of all public rites of worship was one of joyousness, to wit, the invitation to the god to be present and partake of the repast. To spread a meal and ask the deity to share it, that which is called *commensality*, belongs to the most archaic of ceremonies. Captain Clark tells us of the Western Indians that "feasts form an essential part of every ceremony." There is a certain solemnity observed about them, even when not strictly religious in character. The first mouthful is offered to the gods, and "something in the manner of a grace" is usual when the person begins and finishes his meal.*

It was but a step from this to purely religious banquets, festal commemorations for thanksgiving, in acknowledgment of benefits received. They were derived from the older practice of asking the god to share the common meal, not, as some have argued, from the later custom of offering food before the idols. Such solemn banquets occur where idols are unknown, or form a minor element in religious expression. Sacrificial banquets assume a different phase, to which I shall presently refer.

* *Indian Sign Language*, pp. 167–70.

Next in antiquity to the commensality of God with man, was the sacred procession, that which is known as the "ceremonial circuit."

Jacob Grimm informs us that the ancient Germans were accustomed at certain seasons to carry the images of the gods, Holda, Bertha, and others, or the sacred symbols, the plough, the ship, etc., around the borders or marches of the tribal territory, over which they were held to exercise especial protection. Thus they bestowed the active beneficence of their personal presence on these confines. This divine progress was accompanied with shouts and songs and joyous acclamations.*

To this day in central France, when the seed is sown in the spring and the husbandman has trusted his labour and his grain to the uncertain season, the image of Our Lady of Mercy is solemnly carried through the prepared fields, with song and prayer, that her blessing may rest upon them, and the grain return a hundred-fold.

Far away from France and Germany, up in the chilly valleys of the Peruvian Andes, when the natives used to fear, for their crops, killing frost or withering drought, the sacred *huaca*, the divine guardian of the village, was brought forth and carried in solemn procession around the fields, and its

* *Teutonic Mythology*, vol. i., p. 42.

intercession beseeched in moving cries and with abundant gifts.*

Numberless other examples of this universal rite might be mentioned, a rite the shadow of which still falls among us in the processional and recessional of high Protestant churches. Among primitive peoples and in the folk-lore of modern nations, it develops into the forms which are known as "the sinistral and dextral circuits," depending on whether the procession is from right to left or the reverse, connected doubtless with the motion of the celestial bodies, and with the reverse of that motion, each appropriate to certain forms of worship. Throughout the American tribes this is always a point of the greatest importance, and constantly appears, not merely in their religious exercises, but in their social customs, their arts, and their habits of life. †

I mentioned that the old Romans used to consider theatrical entertainments a proper part of a religious ceremony. They were not alone in that. In fact, the opinion was so universal that students of literary origins are agreed that the beginning of the drama, both comedy and tragedy, was in sacred scenic representations of the supposed doings of the gods. We may recognise the earliest form of the drama in the masked

* Von Tschudi, *Beiträge zur Kentniss des Alten Peru*, p. 156.
† See *Myths of the New World*, pp. 112, *sq.*

actors of the American Indian medicine dances. They usually take the part of some lower animal, comic or serious, the face concealed either with a part of its hide, or with a wooden mask, on which is painted some semblance or symbol of the animal. The language of the actor is appropriate to his rôle, and often involves curious modifications of the customary tongue, to suit the creature he represents.*

Long before the discovery of America by Columbus the native tribes of Mexico, Guatemala, and Peru had developed from this source a dramatic literature, which, like that of the early Greek classic period, had thrown off its first, purely religious garb, and had developed into an independent art, devoted equally to Melpomene and Thalia, the tragic and the comic muses.

These latter, of which a few specimens survive, were exotic plants compared to the indigenous growth of the American sacred dramas. So essential, indeed had these become to the native notions of worship of any sort, that the Christian missionaries were fain to compromise the situation, and permit them to remain, merely changing the names of the heathen gods to those of Christian saints, and modifying where necessary the wording of the older text and its heathen *scenario*.

* See Richard Andree's remarks on "die Masken im Kultus," in his *Ethnographische Parallelen, Neue Folge*, p. 109, *sq.*

The extreme of these festal rejoicings is seen in the orgiastic ceremonies so widely prevalent in early cults, the Bacchanalia, the Saturnalia, the "Witches' Sabbath" of the Middle Ages, and the like. They are nowise peculiar to primitive religions, although in them they hold a more conspicuous place. Within a year, the "angel-dancers" of Hoboken, New Jersey, have reproduced them in their true original colours, and they are always ready to crop out under the influence of the proper stimuli to the religious emotions.

In their earliest forms, they are far from deserving the odium which attached to them later. The Bacchantes of Greece were, at first, not a rout of dissolute women, but an inspired train of devout virgins and chaste matrons. No man was permitted in the ranks under pain of death. This was true also in Rome, in the Orient, and in many tribes of America. It was a later and an evil innovation which sanctioned the unrestrained mingling of the sexes in these wild processions of intoxicated fanatics. Their intoxication was, however, with the divine spirit, not the purple grape-juice. They were, as the Greeks said, "theoleptic," possessed or infuriated with the maddening joy of the gods, drunk with the celestial ambrosia.

To our cold observation, they were in hysterical

mania, with minds disordered by religious excitement, worked up to a high contagious pitch through collective suggestion, following crazily the disordered fancies of their sub-conscious selves, mistaking them for the inspiration of divine emanations.

3. The Sacrifice.—In the custom of offering to the divine visitant a portion of the food and drink, we discover the origin of sacrifice. The word has acquired sad associations, seen in our common expression "to make a sacrifice," which signifies some painful self-surrender.

This was foreign to its original meaning. The sacrifice at first was a free-will offering, a pleasing and grateful recognition of the kindness of the deity. The first-fruits, the young kid, the earliest ear of corn to mature, were offered to the beneficent being who had sent them for the good of man. It was the willing acknowledgment we pay to a kind friend. The earliest species of sacrifice is in the nature of a thank-offering. They were of the class which has been termed "honorific," and were little more than "meals offered to the deity." *

I may illustrate it from a custom of the Papuans of New Guinea. They believe, being ancestral worshippers, that the good things of life are mainly owing to the continuing solicitude of their departed

* Jacob Grimm, *Teutonic Mythology*, vol. i., p. 48, *sq.*

progenitors. Therefore, to testify their gratitude, once in several years they dig up the skulls of those deceased relations, paint them with chalk, decorate them with feathers and flowers, and placing them on a scaffold, offer to them food and trinkets.*

There is nothing of fear in this rite, and nothing fearful, for it is made the occasion of a merry festival.

Soon, however, in the development of the cult it was perceived that loss and affliction abounded and increased; the gods grew careless of their votaries, or angry with them. They must be pacified and propitiated. Hence arose the second form of sacrifices, those which are called "conciliatory" or "piacular." † They were atoning in significance, mystic in their symbolism, expiatory in their aims. The gods were displeased at what man had done or had left undone, and they must be reconciled by humility and self-abnegation.

In this the primitive worshipper acted towards his deity just as he would toward an earthly superior whose displeasure he had incurred. There was no new sentiment or line of action introduced. The rite of sacrifice in any of its phases offers nothing apart from the general motives of mankind.

* A. B. Meyer, in *Globus*, Bd. lxvii., p. 334.

† The terms "honorific" and "piacular" were, I believe, first suggested by Dr. W. Robertson Smith. They are very appropriate.

The most common reason for early sacrifice was to expiate breaches of the ceremonial law. Whether this occurred intentionally or not of purpose, it was deemed requisite to make amends by some painful act, to pacify the demonic power behind the law.

Naturally, the greater the self-denial displayed in the offering, the higher its merit and the more efficacious its character. The ancient Germans laid it down that in time of famine beasts should first be slain and offered to the gods. Did these bring no relief, then men must be slaughtered; and if still there was no aid from on high, then the chieftain of the tribe himself must mount the altar*; for the nobler and dearer the victim, the more pleased were the gods!

The same doctrine prevailed practically through most primitive religions, and was carried to a like extent. Painful mutilations of oneself, the lopping of a finger, scarification, driving thorns through the tongue or the flesh elsewhere, burning with hot coals, scourging, and supporting crushing weights: these are but a few of the many terrible sufferings which the individual inflicted on himself.

Thus steeled to pain in his own person, he knew no limit to its infliction on others. The tortures of captives or of slaves dedicated to the gods, common

* Holtzmann, *Deutsche Mythologie*, p. 232.

in American religions, formed part of the religious value of the ceremony. Not merely captives and slaves, but those of his own household and blood, his nearest and his dearest, must the true worshipper be prepared to surrender, were it his first-born son or the wife of his bosom. It was not heartlessness or cruelty which prompted him, but obedience to that law of the supernatural, which ever claims for itself supremacy over all laws and all passions of the natural man.

Traces of human sacrifice are discovered in the early history of even the noblest religions, and the rite extended so widely that scarce a cult can be named in which it did not exist.

What rendered them the more general was the underlying belief that, let the sacrifice be sufficiently exalted, the gods *could not* resist it. They were constrained by its magical power, and whatever was desired could be extorted from them, with or without their volition. So to this day teach the Hindu priests, and so believed the ancient Romans and various primitive nations.

4. The Communion with God.—The idea of atonement in the piacular sacrifice is in reality that of being *one with the god*, that of entering into union or communion with him. This, indeed, lies largely at the base of all the forms of ritualistic worship. Its

purpose, more or less clearly avowed, is to bring into spiritual unison the worshipper and the worshipped.

A few examples from American rites will illustrate this.

The natives of Nicaragua at the time of maize gathering were accustomed to sacrifice a man to the gods of the harvest. Around the altar were strewn grains of corn. Over these the worshippers stood and with flint knives let blood from the most sensitive parts of their bodies, the drops falling on the grains. These were then eaten as holy food, part of the sacrifice.*

Something very similar obtained in Peru. At the time of the vernal equinox, all strangers were bidden to leave the sacred city of Cuzco, where the Inca resided. A human victim was immolated, and the spotless "Virgins of the Sun" were deputed to mingle his blood with meal and bake it into small cakes. These were distributed among the people and eaten, and one was sent to every holy shrine and temple in the kingdom.† Precisely such a rite prevailed among the ancient Germans. At the harvest supper the spirit of the corn, represented latterly under the form of an animal but in earlier days as a child, was slain and eaten by those who had aided in the harvest. It

* Oviedo, *Historia de las Indias*, lib. x., cap. xi.
† Balboa, *Histoire du Perou*, pp. 125–7.

was the literal and corporeal union of man and the the god. *

Still clearer was the similar ceremony of the Aztecs. A youth was chosen and named for the god. For months his every wish was gratified. Then he was slain on the altar and his fresh blood was mixed with dough which was divided among the worshippers and eaten. Thus they became partakers of the Divine Nature. †

The fearful similarity of this ceremony both in its form and in its intention to that of the Christian Eucharist could not escape the notice of the Spanish missionaries. They attributed it to the malicious suggestions of the Devil, thus parodying in cruel and debased traits the sacred mysteries of the Church. But the psychologist sees in them all the same inherent tendency, the same yearning of the feeble human soul to reach out towards and make itself a part of the Divine Mind.

II. THE PERSONAL RITES, those for the benefit of the individual, will next occupy us.

I have already observed that while the tribe or gens in primitive conditions worships in common one or several divinities, most of the religious acts of the individual are directed toward a deity whom he may claim as his own special guardian and friend. This

* Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, vol. ii., p. 31.
† Sahagun, *Historia de la Nueva España*, lib. i.

is his tutelary god, his personal *δαίμων*, his "mystagogue," who will not merely look after the welfare of his human ward, but introduce him into the higher and occult knowledge and power.

This personal deity reveals himself at birth, or may await some later year or incident of life to manifest his name and nature. He may be the spirit of some ancestor or great chieftain or mighty shaman; or he may belong to those deities who never assume mortal habiliments. The teachers of early faiths differed on these points; but nearly all agreed that to each person some such guardian angel or genius was assigned. From these spirits the personal names were frequently received, and, lest these should be misused, they were usually kept secret.

These beliefs are too wide-spread to require support from examples. Probably every American tribe shared them. They are familiar in classic Greece and Rome. The Finns and the ancient Celtic peoples possessed them in marked forms; and they survive in the tutelary Saints of the Roman Church.

Principally to these the adults paid their devotions and offered their vows for what concerned their personal welfare; and many of the rites which I am about to describe, derive their meaning from their connection with this belief. I shall classify them as relating: 1, to birth; 2, to naming; 3, to puberty;

4, to marriage; and 5, to death and the disposal of the corpse.

1. Rites Relating to Birth.—Although the immediate act of childbirth may not cause the savage mother severe suffering, the appearance of a new human being in the world is not considered of light importance. In her description of the Pueblo Indians of New Mexico, Mrs. Stevenson remarks that some "of their most sacred and exclusive rites are connected with childbirth," and her full and accurate account of them reveals in a strong light how solemn the event was considered.*

In many tribes the child was considered bound to its father by some mysterious tie closer than connected it with its mother. Among the Northern Indians, the father will not bridle a horse or perform sundry other acts for a fixed period after the birth of his child, for if he did it would die!† In the rites of Mexico and South America, this refraining from certain labours passed into the strange custom of the *couvade*. This was, that upon the birth of the child, the *father* took to his bed and remained there for a number of days. Did he neglect this, it was believed that the child would die or have bad luck. For the same reason he had to be ex-

* Mrs. M. C. Stevenson, in *An. Rep. Bureau of Ethnology*, vol. xi., p. 132.

† Dorsey, *Siouan Cults*, p. 511.

tremely careful of his own health and guarded in his actions during his wife's pregnancy, or otherwise the unborn babe would suffer.*

Not less strange are the wide-spread rites and opinions connected with the umbilical cord. As it united the unborn infant to the life of the mother, it was generally held to retain that power in a mystical sense. Among the American Indians, it was a frequent custom to carry it to a distance and bury it, and it became the duty of the individual, in his later life, to visit alone from time to time that spot, and perform certain ceremonies.†

Thus the religious life of a person began with his birth. Not infrequently at that time his tutelary divinity was ascertained by the priests and assigned him, as among the Mayas, and the Africans of the Congo River. With the latter, it was also customary to lay upon the new-born babe a series of "vows," or resolutions touching his conduct in life. These were impressed on the mother, who adopted it as a sacred duty to bring up her child in obedience to them. A similar habit prevailed in the Andaman Islands and elsewhere.‡

* A. d'Orbigny, *L'Homme Américain*, tom. i., p. 237.

† Examples in my *Native Calendar of Central America*, p. 18. It was a favourite amulet among the Crees (Mackenzie, *Hist. of the Fur Trade*, p. 86).

‡ Achelis, *Moderne Völkerkunde*, p. 370; Man, in *Jour. Anthrop. Inst.*, vol. xii., p. 172.

With these vows was often associated the rite of baptism, by sprinkling or by immersion in water. Even among the rude Yahgans of Tierra del Fuego we find that the child, when born, was promptly dipped in water, not for sanitary but for religious reasons.

The ancient inhabitants of Teneriffe considered it necessary to have a child formally asperged by a priestess before acknowledging it as a member of the family,* and some such rite was prevalent in many tribes. It was in one sense an initiation, as it was with the neophytes of the mysteries of Mithras, who, according to Tertullian, were baptised upon entering the novitiate. In another, it would seem to have been a purification from inherited sin, in which sense it was practised by the Nahuas of Mexico and the Quichuas of Peru. With the Mayas of Yucatan, it was in common usage and was known by the significant name, "the second birth."†

2. Relating to the Name.—The Name, as we have already seen, was looked upon as a part of the person, one of his forms or modes of life. Very generally,

* Charlevoix, *Hist. de la Nouvelle France*, ch. vi. Sprinkling the new-born child as a religious ceremony prevailed in New Zealand and throughout Polynesia. (Fornander, *The Polynesian Race*, vol. i., p. 236.)

† Cogolludo, *Historia de Yucatan*, lib. iv., cap. vi. The same belief prevailed in some African tribes; see Achelis, *Moderne Völkerkunde*, p. 393.

its selection was a matter of religious moment, and accompanied with solemn ceremonies. A person might have many names, but there was one which was taken from or referred to his or her tutelary spirit, and this was holy and not to be lightly used.

Among the Nahuas this was generally announced by the priest on the seventh day after birth, but as it would be profane to speak it constantly, another was employed for ordinary conversation. The Algonquin children, says one who lived among them long, are taught by their mothers not to divulge their real names, lest by so doing they should offend the personal god who has taken them under his protection.*

When a babe, among the Seminoles of Florida, was about a fortnight old, the mother took it in her arms and walked three times around the public square of the village, calling aloud the name given it; but this name was not that by which it was later known; and "they were always averse to telling it." † With some tribes, as the Choctaws, the idea of profanity existed only if the person himself spoke his name; so that, "it is impossible to get it from him unless he has an acquaintance present, whom he will request to tell it for him." ‡ Analogous customs abound in

* H. R. Schoolcraft, *Oneota*, pp., 331, 456.

† *Notices of East Florida by a Recent Traveller*, p. 79.

‡ Gregg, *Commerce of the Prairies*, vol., ii., p. 271.

early religions and many of them survive in modern folk-lore.*

In some instances the American Indian would exchange his name for that of a friend, or extend to him his name; a rare and high sign of amity, as it signified that the receiver was thus placed under the guardianship of the same tutelar deity. This custom extended widely throughout the island world of the Pacific and among many primitive peoples. It has often been noted, but its peculiarly religious meaning has generally been misunderstood.

That certain names are auspicious and others inauspicious is a belief that belongs everywhere to mankind in the primitive stage of thought. But it is curious to note that while generally the auspicious names are those of sweet sound and favourable sense, in Tonkin, Siam, and some other regions ugly and unpleasant names are preferred, because these will frighten away the evil spirits.†

3. Rites Relating to Puberty.—On the momentous crisis in the personal life when the boy enters into manhood and the girl becomes a woman, in nearly all primitive tribes a solemn rite is prescribed, the object of which is to prepare the child for the duties of the wider life, which it is about to begin.

* Examples in E. S. Hartland's *Science of Fairy Tales*, p. 309.
† R. Andree, *Ethnographische Parallelen*, p. 177.

No better example for such a ceremony could be selected than that which prevails among the southern tribes of Australia. It is their principal public act of worship. The name by which it is known is the *Bora*,* a word derived from the belt or girdle which the men wear, and which is at that time conferred on the youth. Its celebration involves extensive preparations and occupies a number of days. The youths are submitted to severe tests and sometimes to dreadful mutilations. They are taught the holy names and sacred traditions; and when they have satisfied their elders of their endurance and fidelity, they are admitted to the manhood of the tribe.

The *Bora* is a distinctly religious ceremony. It is said to have been instituted by their chief god Turamulun himself, and remains under his spiritual charge. Its rites "involve the idea of a dedication to supernatural powers," and the figure of the god, moulded in high relief on the earth in the costume and attitude of the sacred dance, is intended to represent his personal presence. The aim is the education of the individual to fill his place properly in the tribal life; and one of the most intelligent of English observers expresses his conviction that

* The *Bora* has been often described, by no one better than Mr. A. W. Howitt in *Jour. Anthrop. Inst.*, vol. vii., p. 242, *sq.*, and vol. xiv., p. 306, *sq.*

"every rule of conduct under which the novice is placed is directly intended to some end beneficent to the community or believed to be."

Throughout most of America, a similar initiation was required of the youth before he was entitled to the privileges of manhood. It was frequently accompanied by the most painful tests of his courage and endurance. His naked back was lacerated with rods, his strength was tried by prolonged hunger, thongs were inserted into his flesh and torn out by the bystanders.

More frequently the boy was sent alone into the woods, and there, exposed to inclement weather, cold, hunger and thirst, self-torture and meditation, awaited the divine revelation which entitled him to call himself a man!

"Could it be possible," exclaims an intelligent traveller, "to hear anything stranger, more wonderful, than these stories of unheard-of castigations and torments to which boys of thirteen or fourteen subject themselves, merely for the sake of an idea, a dream, the fulfilment of a religious duty? More surprising is it that not merely some extraordinary youth is capable of this, but that every young Indian, without exception, displays such heroism."*

The same rule applied to the girl. As it became

* J. G. Kohl, *Kitchi Gami*, p. 228.

evident that the period had arrived in her life-history when she was capable of the sacred duties of motherhood, she either retired into the forest, there to commune alone with her guardian spirit, or, as among the Sioux Indians, the fact was made known to the village, and a solemn feast announced by her parents. At this, some venerable priest addressed the guests, "calling attention to the sacred and mysterious manner in which nature had announced the fact that she was ready to embrace the duties of matrimony!" *

In these ceremonies, which may be said to belong to primitive religions in all times, we recognise again the one idea which more than any other permeated all their myths and rites,—the idea of Life. It was because the boy and girl, passing to riper years, indicated the acquisition of the power to perpetuate and transmit Life, that at this age it was held necessary for them to mark the epoch by rites of the most sacred import.

4. Rites Relating to Marriage.—If the notion of life was thus the inspiration of the rites of puberty, still more potently did it control those relating to marriage.

* Captain Clark, *Indian Sign Language*, p. 254. D'Orbigny describes the bloody ordeals through which girls in South American tribes were obliged to pass. *L'Homme Américain*, tom. i., pp. 193, 237.

Much has been written by special students concerning the forms of primitive marriage, and much of what has been written is theory only, not supported by actual and intimate knowledge of facts.

The assertion is common in works of the kind that the earliest form of marriage was no marriage at all,—mere promiscuity,—and that, later, a modified form of the same, known as "communal" marriage, prevailed. Not a single example of either of these has been known in history or in ethnology, and it is a gratuitous hypothesis only that either ever prevailed in a permanent community.

What we first discern is the family, generally centred around the mother, and tracing descent through the maternal ancestors only. This is the "matriarchal" as distinguished from the "patriarchal" system, the latter being that in which the father is the centre and head of the family, and the genealogy is traced in his line. Both these forms, however, have existed, so far as we know, in wholly primitive conditions. The selection of one or the other was a matter of local accident or incident.

The primitive family, held together by one or other of these ties of blood-relationship, was a close corporation. It might adopt outsiders, but after admission they were considered of the same blood and lineage. Its property was in common, its laws were laid on all,

its very gods were its own. Especially, the rules relating to marriage were prescribed with rigid formality.

The general practice was that the youth must seek his bride from another recognised family (gens or totem) of the tribe. To choose her from his own immediate family was a crime of such deep dye that even an Australian savage "could not consider such a thing possible"; although, in later conditions, this artificial barrier was often weakened.*

In matriarchal systems, the husband usually went to live with the gens of the wife, but did not become a member of it. He was looked upon as a stranger and an interloper. Among some Australian and American tribes, he never spoke directly to his wife's mother, or even looked at her. His children did not acknowledge him as a blood-relation, and when he grew old and useless, he had to look to his own family, not to his own offspring, for his maintenance.

The origin of these strange usages was strictly religious. They have been analysed as they existed in many nations by one of the ablest of German ethnologists, and their source has been shown to be that the gods of the one gens never willingly accept the introduction of a stranger into the household except

* Curr, *The Australian Race*, vol. i., pp. 45–50; Palmer, in *Jour. Anthrop. Inst.*, vol. xiii., p. 301.

by the regular formulas of adoption, which would prevent marriage; hence, the husband is, and ever remains, a foreigner and an interloper in the matriarchal household. His wife's god is not his god, nor are her people his people.*

The actual ceremony of marriage itself often indicates this. Much has been said by writers on ethnology of "marriage by capture," and it is often asserted to be that most usual among primitive peoples, and to continue in survivals in higher conditions of culture.

There is, indeed, very frequently a ceremony which presents the appearance of violently seizing and carrying away by main force the bride-elect. But it is not to be understood as the reminiscence of a time when the man went forth and snatched a girl from some neighbouring tribe to become his slave and his wife. I doubt if in the true totemic marriage, considered as distinct from concubinage, any such method was practised. It is not so to-day, even among the Australian Blacks. If they steal a woman, they first inquire as to her kinship, and if she belongs to a class into which her captor cannot marry, according to the laws of his clan, he sets her free. †

The so-called "marriage by capture" was either a

* See Post, in *Globus*, B. lxvii, s. 274.

† Palmer, *ubi supra*, p. 301.

recognised tribute to maidenly coyness, by which her real or feigned resistance was to be overcome in a manner creditable to herself,—a sentiment constantly witnessed in the lower animals as well as in modern life; or it was a method of conciliating her household gods, the deities of the gens, by giving the appearance of constraint and succumbing to force on the part of the girl. Some of the northern tribes of America carried these notions to the extent of a pretended concealment of the marriage long after it had been performed. The husband was obliged to enter the home of his wife by night and secretly. To approach it in daytime or to be seen in her company would have been a grave impropriety. *

The second primitive form of marriage is by purchase. This also is far less usual than many writers have assumed. There is indeed, very commonly, as in civilised society, an exchange of goods along with or previous to the marital ceremony. But with us it is not regarded as a purchase and sale when an American girl's father gives his daughter and a million to a foreign nobleman in exchange for the title conferred on the bride. It may in reality be a mere commercial transaction, but in theory it is not so.

Just as little is the "marriage by purchase" among most of the aboriginal tribes, where we find it in

* Lafitau, *Mœurs des Sauvages Américains*, lib. ii, ch. vi.

vogue. The exchange of goods is often a form of compensation to the household gods for the privilege of remaining a member of the clan, or for the permission to enter its ranks as an authorised resident.

Of course, women were bought and sold as any other commodity; they were part of the booty of victors, and were dispensed as gifts, or kept for enjoyment. But when we confine ourselves to the examination of the strictly totemic marriage we find even among the wildest tribes that it was generally founded in mutual liking, that it was contracted under the sanction of the recognised family laws, and that its ritual was that of a religious ceremony.* The poor Bushmen, even, believe that the laws relating to marriage are of divine origin, enacted by the sacred ant-eater, and that their infraction will be severely punished. †

The gifts which accompanied the rite were in the nature of offerings. Ceremonies of lustration and purification, in which the sacred elements, fire and water, took a prominent part, were general, and the

* Musters asserts this positively of the Tehuelche and other tribes (*Among the Patagonians*, chap. v.); Captain Clark, whose long experience among our Western tribes constituted him an authority of the first rank, takes pains to correct the notion that *among the natives* wives are bought, although they are by white men (*Indian Sign Language*, pp. 245–6). It would be easy to multiply references to the same effect.

† Bleek. *Bushman Folk-lore*, p. 13.

relationship established was in its essence one of religious significance, and not one of mere secular import.

5. Relating to Death.—An attractive writer, Professor Frank Granger, remarks in a recent volume: "The first attitude of primitive man to his dead seems to have been one of almost unmixed terror." * Would that we could give primitive man so much credit! But we cannot. The evidence is mountain-high that in the earliest and rudest period of human history the corpse inspired so little terror that it was nearly always eaten by the surviving friends! †

We can look back clearly through the corridors of time to that stage of development when death and the dead inspired no more terror or aversion in man than they do to-day among the carnivorous brutes.

Throughout the whole of the palæolithic period of culture we discover extremely faint traces of any mode of sepulture, any respect for the dead.

The oldest cemeteries or funeral monuments of any sort date from the neolithic period. Then the full meaning of Death seems to have broken suddenly on man, and his whole life became little more than a *meditatio mortis*, a preparation for the world

* *Worship of the Romans*, p. 67.

† This has been demonstrated beyond reasonable doubt by Dr. S. K. Steinmetz in a remarkable study of "Endo-cannibalismus," in the *Archiv für Anthropolgie*, 1896.

beyond the tomb. What Professor Granger says of the ancient Romans applies to very many primitive tribes: "In the belief of the Romans, the right to live was not estimated more highly than the right to receive proper burial." *

The funeral or mortuary ceremonies, which are often so elaborate, and so punctiliously performed in savage tribes, have a twofold purpose. They are equally for the benefit of the individual and for that of the community. If they are neglected or inadequately conducted, the restless spirit of the departed cannot reach the realm of joyous peace, and therefore he returns to lurk about his former home and to plague the survivors for their carelessness.

It was therefore to lay the ghost, to avoid the anger of the disembodied spirit, that the living instituted and performed the burial ceremonies; while it became to the interest of the individual to provide for it that those rites should be carried out which would conduct his own soul to the abode of the blessed.

These were as various as were the myths of the after-world and the fancies as to the number and destiny of the personal souls.

* Granger, *ubi supra*, p. 37. The word "burial" in ethnology is used to denote all modes of disposal of the corpse. This is etymologically correct. See Yarrow, *Mortuary Customs of the North American Indians*, p. 5.

Most common of them all was some sort of funeral feast. The disagreeable suggestion is close, that this was a survival of the habit of eating the corpse itself. Up to a very recent date that habit prevailed among the Bolivian Indians; and so desirable an end was it esteemed that the traveller D'Orbigny tells of an old man he met there whose only regret at embracing Christianity was that his body would be eaten by worms instead of by his relations!

The later theory, however, was that then the soul itself was supplied with food. It partook spiritually of the viands and thus, well fortified for its long journey, departed in good humour with those it left behind. The same notion led to the world-wide custom of providing it with many articles by placing them in the tomb or burning them on the funeral pyre. This extended not only to weapons, utensils, ornaments, and clothing, but not infrequently to companions. On the coast of Peru the wives of a man were burned alive with his dead body, and among the Natchez they were knocked on the head and interred under the same mounds.* I have seen

* Navarrete, *Viages*, tom. iii., p. 401; Dumont, *Mems. Hist. sur la Louisiane*, tom. i., p. 178; Gumilla, *Hist. del Orinoco*, p. 201. Coréal says, the widows esteemed it a privilege to be buried with the corpse and disputed among themselves for the honour, *Voiages*, tom. ii., pp. 93, 94. The Taenzas had the same customs as the Natchez, Tonty, *Mémoire*, in French, *Hist. Colls. of Louisiana*, p. 61.

the mummy of a woman from the Cliff Dwellers of Arizona, holding in her arms the body of her babe which had been strangled with a cord, still tightly stretched around its little neck. Plainly the sympathetic survivors had reflected how lonely the poor mother would be in the next world without her babe, and had determined that its soul should accompany hers. Elsewhere, slaves or companions in arms were slain or slew themselves that they might accompany some famous chieftain to his long home.

In these funeral rites the disposal of the corpse depended upon ethnic traits, ancestral usage, or the instructions of the priests.

Perhaps the earliest was simple exposure. The body was left in the forest for the beasts and birds to consume, as among the Caddo Indians and others; or it was sunk in the waters that the fish should perform the same office; the usual object being to obtain the bones with the least trouble. The oldest of all burials yet discovered, those in the caves in the south of France, were of this character, simple "seposition" as it is called. The body was merely laid in a posture of repose on the cave floor, with the weapons and ornaments it had used during life.*

Next in point of time doubtless came inhumation,

* Arthur J. Evans, in *Proc. Brit. Assoc. Adv. Science*, 1896, Sect. H.

the interment of the body in the ground or covering it, laid on the surface, with stones and earth,—the burial mound. Homeric Greeks, American Indians, and tribes of all continents practised this method in different ages, and the barrows or tumuli thus erected remain in thousands to this day to attest the religious earnestness of those early peoples. The vast monuments which at times they constructed for their dead, the pyramids, dolmens, and teocalli, have never since been equalled in magnitude or cubical contents.

Another and significant funeral rite of high antiquity is that of cremation or incineration. It was symbolic in character, the body being given to the flames in order that the spirit, by their purifying agency, should promptly be set free and united with the gods. This method also prevailed extensively among the American race, and was quite in consonance with their opinions of the after-life. "It is the one passion of his superstition," writes Mr. Powers of the Californian Indian, "to think of the soul of his departed friend as set free, and purified by the flames; not bound to the mouldering body, but borne up on the soft clouds of the smoke toward the beautiful sun." *

* Stephen Powers, *Indians of California*, pp. 181, 207. The Tasmanians and Fuegians, probably the lowest of known tribes, burned their dead. Hyades et Deniker, *Mission Scientifique*, p. 379; Fenton, *History of Tasmania*, p. 95. Some tribes gave as a reason for

Other peoples entertained the opinion that the body as it is, in all its parts, must be preserved in order that it might be again habitable for the soul, when this ethereal essence should return to earth from its celestial wanderings. Therefore, with utmost care they sought for means to preserve the fleshly tenement. In Virginia, in some parts of South America, on the Madeira Islands, the aboriginal population dried the corpse over a slow fire into a condition that resisted decay; while elsewhere, the nitrous soil of caves offered a natural means of embalming. The Alaskan and Peruvian mummies, like those of ancient Egypt, were artificially prepared and swathed in numerous cerecloths. In all, the same faith in the literal resurrection of the flesh was the prevailing motive.

More generally, the belief was held that the soul remained attached in some way to the bones. These were carefully cleaned and either preserved in the house, or stored in ossuaries. Frequently they were kept as amulets or mascots, in the notion that the friendly spirit which animated the living person would continue to hover around his skeleton or skull, and exert its amicable power. The Peruvians held that the bones of their deceased priests were oracu-

burning their dead that otherwise bears and wolves would eat the corpse, and the soul would be obliged to take on their forms.—*Pres. Message and Ac. Docs.*, 1851, pt. iii., p. 506.

lar, speaking good counsel, and the missionaries were obliged to break them into small fragments to dispel this superstition*; though they themselves continued to hold it heretical to doubt the efficacy of the bones of the saints! A tribe on the Orinoco was wont to beat the bones of their dead into powder and mix it with their cassava bread, holding that thus their friends and parents lived again in the bodies of the eaters!

After cremation, the ashes were left upon the altar, and the whole covered with earth; or they were preserved in urns with the fragments of the bones; or, as with a tribe of the Amazon, they were cast upon the waters of the great river and floated down to the limitless ocean.

Thus closed the last scene in the existence of the primitive man. From birth to death he had been surrounded and governed by the ceremonies of his religion; and on his passage out of this life, he confidently looked to another in which he should find a compensation and a consolation for the woes of his present condition.

Following these funerary functions came the customs of mourning. They were often excessively protracted and severe, involving self-mutilation, as

* Alonso de la Peña Montenegro, *Itinerario para Parrocos de Indios*,, p. 185 (Madrid, 1771).

the lopping of a finger or an ear, scarification, flagellation, fasting, and cutting the hair. These were shared by the friends and relatives of the deceased, and at the death of some famous chief "the whole tribe will prostrate themselves to their woe."

The psychic explanation of these demonstrations is not wholly clear. By some they have been interpreted as a commutation for cannibalism, and by others as an excuse for not accompanying the corpse into the other world. One writer says: "Barbarism, abandoned to sorrow, finds physical suffering a relief from mental agony." * On the other hand, a recent student of the subject claims that in these rites we perceive "the oldest evidence of active conscience in the human race; the individual laid hands on himself in order to restore the moral equilibrium." † Need we go farther than to see in them merely exaggerated forms of the same emotional outbursts which lead nervous temperaments everywhere to wring the hands and tear the hair in moments of violent grief?

* Clark, *Indian Sign Language*, p. 263.
† K. T. Preuss, in the *Bastian Festschrift.*

LECTURE VI.

The Lines of Development of Primitive Religions.

CONTENTS:—Pagan Religions not wholly Bad—Their Lines of Development as Connected with: 1. The Primitive Social Bond—The Totem, the Priesthood, and the Law; 2. The Family and the Position of Woman; 3. The Growth of Jurisprudence—The Ordeal, Trial by Battle, Oaths, and the Right of Sanctuary—Religion is Anarchic; 4. The Development of Ethics—Dualism of Primitive Ethics—Opposition of Religion to Ethics; 5. The Advance in Positive Knowledge—Religion *versus* Science; 6. The Fostering of the Arts—The Aim for Beauty and Perfection—Colour-Symbolism, Sculpture, Metre, Music, Oratory, Graphic Methods—Useful Arts, Architecture; 7. The Independent Life of the Individual—His Freedom and Happiness—Inner Stadia of Progress: 1. From the Object to the Symbol; 2. From the Ceremonial Law to the Personal Ideal; 3. From the Tribal to the National Conception of Religion—Conclusion.

IT has always been, and is now, the prevailing belief in Christendom that pagan or heathen religions cannot exert and never have exerted any good influence on their votaries.

This opinion has also been defended by some modern and eminent authorities in the science of ethnology, as, for example, the late Professor Waitz.*

* *Anthropologie des Naturvölker*, Bd. i., p. 459.

It is a favourite teaching in missionary societies and in works of travellers who are keen observers of the shortcomings of others' faiths.

I have never been able to share such a view. The lowest religions seem to have in them the elements which exist in the ripest and the noblest; and these elements work for good wherever they exist. However rude the form of belief in agencies above those of the material world, in a higher law than that confessedly of solely human enactment, and in a standard of duty prescribed by something loftier than immediate advantage,—such a belief must prompt the individual, anywhere, to a salutary self-discipline which will steadily raise him above his merely animal instincts, and imbue him with nobler conceptions of the aims of life.

When he feels himself under the protection of some unseen, but ever near, beneficent power, his emotions of gratitude and love will be stimulated; and when he recognises in the ceremonial law a divine prescription for his own welfare and that of his tribe, he will cheerfully submit to the rigours of its discipline.

The various lines of development which were thus marked out and pursued through the influence of early religious thought, and which reacted to develop it, deserve to be pointed out in detail, since

they have so generally been overlooked or misunderstood.

For convenience of presentation they may be examined under seven headings, as they were connected with: 1. The primitive social bond; 2. The family and the position of woman; 3. The growth of jurisprudence; 4. The development of ethics; 5. The advance in positive knowledge; 6. The fostering of the arts; and 7. The independent life of the individual.

These are the main elements of ethnology; and as they progressed to higher forms and finer specialisations, partly through the influence of religion, they in turn reflected back to it their brighter lustre, and the symmetrical growth of a richer culture was thus secured.

1. The first to be named should be the construction of the primitive society. This was essentially religious. I have already emphasised how completely the savage is bound up in his faith, how it enters into nigh every act and thought of his daily life. This may be illustrated by its part in four very early and widely existing forms of social ties—the totem, the sacred society, the priesthood, and the ceremonial law.

The totemic bond I have previously explained. It existed in many American and Australian tribes

and relics of it can be discerned in the early peoples of Europe, Asia, and Africa. Its constitution was avowedly religious. The supposed or "eponymous" ancestor of the totem was a mythical existence, a sort of deity. He was known only through a revelation, either in visions, or, through the assertions of the elders of the clan, in which latter case the myth was the origin of the relationship. Theoretically, all members of the totem were kinfolk, "of one blood," and the numerous rites connected with the letting of blood were generally to symbolise this teaching.*

In various tribes, as among the Sioux and in Polynesia, the totem did not prevail. Its place was taken by societies, sacred in character, the members of which were bound closely together by some supernatural tie. As our Indians say, all the members "had the same medicine." The relation these societies bear to the tribe is not dissimilar to that elsewhere held by totems.

In nearly all primitive peoples the priesthood exerts a powerful influence in preserving the unity of the tribe, in presenting an immovable opposition to external control. This is well known to the Christian

* The application of the blood, observes Professor Granger, "bound together in some way those who were present at the rite" (*Worship of the Romans*, p. 210). This subject is fully discussed by Dr. H. C. Trumbull in his works, *The Blood Covenant*, and *The Threshold Covenant.*

missionaries and bitterly resented by them. These shamans and "medicine-men" are the most persistent opponents of civilisation and Christianity; but it must be remembered that the same conservatism on their part has for centuries been the chief preventive of tribal dissolution and decay. While we regret that they should resist what is good, we must recognise the value of their services to their people in the past.*

The ceremonial law belongs, as I have elsewhere said, to the primary forms of religion. It is in full force, as among the Mincopies and Yahgans, where it is difficult to perceive any other form of religious expression. It is deemed by all to be divine in origin, imparted in dreams or visions by supernatural visitors, transcending therefore all human enactments. It defines the proper conduct of the individual, and prescribes what is allowed and what is forbidden to him. Obedience to it is constantly inculcated under the threat of the severest penalties.

These are the main forces which moulded the earliest human societies known to us, and may be said to have first created society itself. They are all

*Castren, in the Introduction to his *Finnische Mythologie*, has some excellent remarks on the beneficial effects of shamanism. It is an effort to free the human mind from the shackles of blind natural forces; it recognises the dependence of the subjective on an objective will, etc.

distinctly religious, and their consideration obliges us to acknowledge the correctness of the statement of a distinguished Italian, Professor Tito Vignoli,—"There is no society, however rude and primitive, in which all the relations, both of the individual and of the society itself, are not visibly based on superstitions and mythical beliefs." *

2. Earlier, perhaps, than any definite social organisation was the family bond which united together those of one kinship. This rested upon marriage, the religious character of which in even the rudest tribes I dwelt upon in the last lecture. I then explained the matriarchal system prevalent in so many savage peoples. Necessarily, this exalted the position of woman, by conferring upon her the titular position of head of the house, and often the actual ownership of the family property.

It is a general truth in sociology that we may gauge the tendencies of a given society towards progressive growth by the position it assigns to woman, by the amount of freedom it gives her, and by the respect it pays to her peculiar faculties. Religions which, like Mohammedanism, reduce her to a very subordinate place in life, wholly secondary to that of the male, have worked detrimentally to the advancement of the peoples who have adopted them.

* *Myth and Science*, p. 41.

In some savage tribes, the woman is a mere chattel or slave, denied actual participation in religious rites. But that is by no means the case with all. Among the Hottentots, for example,—who were, when first discovered, a people of respectable culture,—a man can take no higher oath than to swear by his eldest sister; and such is the respect inculcated through his religion, that he never speaks to her unless she addresses him first.*

The more delicate nervous organisation of women adapts them peculiarly to the perception of those sub-conscious states which are the psychic sources of inspiration and revelation. Very widely, therefore, in primitive religions they occupied the position of seeresses and priestesses, and were reverenced in accordance therewith. Among the Dyaks of Borneo, in former days, all the recognised priestly class were women. Their bodies were supposed to be the chosen residence of the Sangsangs, beautiful beings, friendly to men. These inspired women, called Bilians or Borich, were subject to theoleptic fits, in which they gave advice, foretold the future, recited rhythmic songs, etc. They were under no restraint of conduct, as what they did, it was held, was the prompting of the god. So firm was their influence that, when, in modern days, the men also became

* Hahn, *Tsuni ǁ Goam*, p. 21.

priests, they were obliged to wear the garb of women.*

The Siamese also entertain this opinion. Their gods speak through the mouth of some chosen woman. When she feels the visit of the spirit to be near, she arrays herself in a handsome red silk garment, and as the deity enters her, she discourses of the other world, tells where lost objects are to be found, and the like. The assembled company worship her, or rather the god in her. On recovering from her theopneustic trance, she professes entire unconsciousness of what has taken place. †

The American Indians very generally concede to their women an exalted rank in their religious mysteries. The Algonquins had quite as famous "medicine-women" as medicine-men, and the same was true generally. Mr. Cushing tells me that there is only one person among the Zuñis who is a member of all the sacred societies and thus knows the secrets of all, and that person is a woman.

When Votan, the legendary hero of the Tzentals of Chiapas, left them for his long journey, he placed his sacred apparatus and his magical scrolls in a cave under the charge of a high priestess, who was to appoint her successor of the same sex until his

* Ling Roth, *Natives of Sarawak*, vol. i., pp. 259, 271, 282 ; vol. ii., App., p. clxxx.

† Walthouse, in *Jour. Anthrop. Inst.*, vol. v., p. 415.

return. The secret was faithfully kept and the successors appointed for more than a hundred and fifty years after their conversion to Christianity ; until, in 1692, on the occasion of the visit of the Bishop to the hamlet where the priestess lived, she disclosed the story, and the holy relics were burned.*

Twenty years later, as if to avenge this, the Tzentals revolted in a body, their leader being an inspired prophetess of their tribe, a girl of twenty, fired with enthusiasm to drive the Spaniards from the land and restore the worship of the ancient gods. †

It is quite usual to find in early religions many rites, such as dances and sacrifices, which women alone carry out, and to which it is *tabu* for any man to be admitted. This naturally arises in those cults where the deities are divided sexually into male and female. Such in their origin were the Bacchanals of ancient Greece, participated in at first by women and girls only, celebrated in devotion to the productive powers of nature, which were held to belong more especially to the female sex. ‡ The "wise women"

* Nuñez de la Vega, *Constituciones Diocesanas de Chiapas*, fol. 9.

† The locally famous Maria Candelaria. At the head of fifteen thousand warriors, she defied the Spanish army for nearly a year, and, though defeated, was never captured. Her story is scantily recorded by Vicente Pineda, in his *Historia de las Sublevaciones Indigenas en el Estado de Chiapas*, pp. 38–70.

‡ Otfried Müller, *Die Etrusker*, Bd. ii., ss. 77, 78.

of many primitive faiths formed a close caste by themselves, no male being admitted, in imitation of their mythological prototypes in the heavens. The "witches" of the Middle Ages were lineal successors of the Teutonic priestesses, who took as their model the "swan-maidens" or "wish-women" of Odin.*

Another form of early institutions was that of the societies of virgins, such as that which from primitive Italic times kept alive the holy fire of Vesta, goddess of the hearth and home. Extensive associations of a similar nature were found by the European explorers in Mexico, Yucatan, Peru, and elsewhere.

A curious teaching of several wide-spread cults was that women alone were endowed with immortality. Such was the opinion of the natives of the Marquesas Islands, and in Samoa the myth related that the god Supa (paralysis) ordained in the council of creation that the life of a man should be like a torch, which, when blown out, cannot be again lighted by blowing; but that a woman's soul should live always. †

No one can doubt that in thus assigning a high and often the highest place in the religious mysteries

* Compare Keary, *Outlines of Primitive Belief*, p. 60; and Maury, *La Magie et Astrologie*, p. 386, *sq.*

† Geo. Turner, *Samoa*, p. 9; Dr. Tautain, in *L'Anthropologie*, tome vii., p. 548.

to woman, many primitive religions surrounded her with a sacredness which was constantly recognised, and thus aided in the improvement of her social relations. The value of virtue and purity was increased, mere animal desires were subjected to religious restraint, and the relations of sex came increasingly to be regarded as instituted by divine wisdom for special purposes.

3. Although the specifications of the ceremonial law were often capricious and absurd, and sometimes positively hurtful, yet it developed the habit of obedience and the respect for authority. In this manner it potently aided the evolution of jurisprudence—that is, of those rules of conduct which grow out of the habit of men living together and which are necessary to preserve amicable relations. These had their origin in other than religious considerations, but when once consciously recognised as beneficial, the religion of the tribe generally adopted them, claimed their creation, and threw around them the garb of its own protective power. Religion then actively aided in the fulfilment of purely social duties, as these were understood by the tribe.

In primitive conditions, all laws are God's laws. As we would say, there is no separation of the civil and criminal from the canon law. To the Moham-

medan, the Koran is the source of all jurisprudence. This is a survival from early thought.

From this it followed that the punishment of crime and the decisions between litigants were, properly, judgments of God. This universal opinion is reflected in a number of traits in jurisprudence, some of which are still in vogue in civilised lands. The most noteworthy are the ordeal, trial by battle, oaths, and the privilege of sanctuary.

Ordeals were universal. They all rested on the belief that the gods would rescue the innocent man from danger. He might be required to hold red-hot iron in his hands; he might be plunged long under water; swallow poison; or in any other way expose himself to pain or death; if he were unjustly accused, the invisible powers would protect him.*

The trial by battle involved the same opinion. "If the Lord is on my side, why should I fear?" is the confident belief at the basis of every such test of skill and strength. †

* On the ordeal, see Post, *Ethnologisches Jurisprudenz*, Bd. ii., ss. 459, *sq.*, 479; Waitz, *Anthropologie der Naturvölker*, Bd. i., s. 461. The assertion by some writers that the ordeal was not known to the American Indians is incorrect. For example, Captain Clark recounts those to test the virtue of women who have been accused. *Indian Sign Language*, pp. 45, 208.

† See S. K. Steinmetz on "Der Zweikampf als Ordal" in his *Ethnologische Studien zur ersten Entwicklung der Strafe*, Bd. ii., s. 76, *sq.*

These forms of decision have disappeared, but the oath remains as vigorous as ever in our law courts. It is, however, as has been pointed out by the able ethnologist and lawyer, Dr. Post, originally and in spirit nothing else than an ordeal. The false witness, the perjurer, is believed to expose himself to the wrath of God and to suffer the consequences in this or another life.*

The rite of sanctuary was distinctly religious. The criminal among the Hebrews, who could escape to the temple and cling to the horns of the altar, must not be seized by the officers of justice. The Cherokee Indians, like the Israelites, had "cities of refuge," which they called "white towns." With the Acagchemem, a Californian tribe, the temples were so purifying that the evil-doer, were he guilty even of murder, who could reach them before he was caught, was cleansed of his sin and absolved ever after from any punishment for it.†

In these vital relations we see how religion entered deeply into civil life, and became a guide and director of its most essential procedures. Its development grew with its responsibilities and with the intimacy it cultivated with practical affairs.

The codes of statutes instituted by ancient legis-

* Post, *ubi supra*, Bd. ii., s. 478.

† Adair, *Hist. of the N. American Indians*, p. 158; Boscana, *Acc. of the Indians of California*, p. 262.

lators, usually personified under some one famous name, as Moses, Manu, Menes, or the like, obtained general adoption through the belief that they emanated directly from divinity, and were part of the ceremonial law. Under favour of this disguise, they worked for the good of those who followed them, and gained a credence which would not have been conceded to them, had it been thought that they were of human manufacture.

Toward merely human law the religious sentiment is in its nature and derivation in frequent opposition. It claims a nobler lineage and a higher title. In theory, the Church must always be above the State, as God is superior to man. Religion, when vital and active, is ever revolutionary and anarchic. It ever aims at substituting divine for human ordinances.

This has been from earliest times its constant tendency. It has been a potent dissolvent of states and governments and of such older religious expressions as have become humanised by usage and formality.

In this manner it has been the most powerful of all levers in stimulating the human mind to active enterprise and the use of all its faculties. Man owes less to his conscious than to his sub-conscious intelligence, and of this religion has been the chief interpreter.

4. The severest blows have been dealt at primitive

or pagan religions on account of the inferiority of their ethics. It has often been asserted that they do not cultivate the moral faculties and benevolent emotions, but stifle and pervert them. They are, therefore, considered to be distinctly evil in tendency.

This important criticism cannot be disposed of by a mere denial. There is no doubt that the ethics of barbarism is not that of a high civilisation. But if we understand the necessary conditions of tribal life in the unending conflicts of the savage state, we can see that the highest moral code would find no place there.

All tribal religions preach a dualism of ethics, one for the members of the tribe, who are bound together by ties of kinship and by union to preserve existence; and the other, for the rest of the world. To the former are due aid, kindness, justice, truth and fair dealing; to the latter, enmity, hatred, injury, falsehood, and deceit. The latter is just as much a duty as the former, and is just as positively enjoined by both religion and tribal law.*

The state of barbarism is one of perpetual war, in which each petty tribe is striving to conquer, rob, and

* This is presented admirably and at length by M. Kulisher in an article "Der Dualismus der Ethik bei den primitiven Völkern," in the *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, Bd. xvii, pp. 205, *sqq*. He also sees clearly enough that the same principle, masked and denied though it be, reigns to-day. The "categorical imperative" of Kant, is as far from realisation as is "the golden rule."

destroy its neighbours. The Patagonians and Australians wander about their sterile lands in small bands, naked and shelterless, owning nothing but the barest necessities. But whenever two of these bands approach each other, it is the signal for a murderous struggle, in order to obtain possession of the wretched rags and trumperies of the opponent.

For this reason, the development of ethics must be studied on inclusive lines, as to what extent they were cultivated between members of the same social unit, the totem or the tribe. The duty of kindness to others extended to a very limited distance, but, within that area, may have been, and generally was, punctually observed. The devotion of members of the same gens to each other, even to the sacrifice of life, has been often noted among savages. The duties involved by this connection were frequently onerous and dangerous, as in the common custom of blood revenge, where a man, at the imminent peril and often at the loss of his own life, felt constrained to slay the murderer of a fellow-clansman.

The character of the early gods was, as a rule, non-ethical. They were generally neither wholly good nor wholly bad. They were more or less friendly toward men, but rarely constantly either beneficent or malignant. They were too human for that.*

* There were, of course, some hobgoblins always ready to eat up or injure man ; but not for any moral or ethical reason. " They

Hence the religions which were founded upon such conceptions were not in their prescriptions of conduct chiefly ethical, but rather ceremonial. Moral conduct was of less importance than the performance of the rites, the recitation of the formulas, and the respect for the *tabu*.*

I may go farther, and say that in all religions, in the essence of religion itself, there lies concealed a certain contempt for the merely ethical, as compared with the mystical, in life. That which is wholly religious in thought and emotion is conscious of another, and, it claims, a loftier origin than that which is moral only, based as the latter is, on solely social considerations. I have heard from the pulpits of our own land very gloomy predictions of the fate of the "merely moral man."†

5. That which we call "modern progress" is due

afflict men, not out of anger or to punish sin, but because it is their nature to do so," as Dalton says of the devils of the Oraons. *Ethnology of Bengal*, p. 256.

* This explains what Dr. Robertson Smith, in his *Religion of the Semites*, p. 140, says is so difficult to grasp,—that the primitive idea of holiness is apart from personal character, and even shameful wretches could lay claim to it. Entirely parallel instances are found in the history of Christian heresies, as the Anomians and Anabaptists, who were so holy that they could commit no sin, and hence allowed themselves the wildest licence.

† It is in this sense that Wilhelm von Humboldt wrote: "Wahre Tugend ist unverträglich mit auf Autorität geglaubter Religion." (*Gesammelte Werke*, Bd. vii., p. 72.) This is a cardinal principle in studying the history of ethics.

to the increase of positive knowledge, the enlargement of the domain of objective truth. To this, religion in its early stages made important contributions. The motions of the celestial bodies were studied at first for ceremonial reasons only. They fixed the sacred year and the periods for festivals and sacrifices. Out of this grew astronomy, the civil calendar, and other departments of infantile science.

The rudiments of mathematics were discovered and developed chiefly by the priestly class, and at first for hieratic purposes; and the same is true of the elements of botanical and zoölogical knowledge. The practice of medicine owes some of its most useful resources to the observations of the "medicine-men" or shamans of savage tribes.

While this much and more may justly be stated concerning the contributions of Religion to Science, there can be no question of the irreconcilable conflict between the two. They arise in totally different tracts of the human mind, Science from the conscious, Religion from the sub- or unconscious intelligence. Therefore, there is no common measure between them.

Science proclaims that man is born to know, not to believe, and that truth, to be such, must be verifiable. Religion proclaims that faith is su-

perior to knowledge, and that the truth which is intuitive is and must be higher than that which depends on observation. Science acknowledges that it can reach no certain conclusions; its final decisions are always followed by a mark of interrogation. Religion despises such hesitancy, and proceeds in perfect confidence of possessing the central and eternal verity. Science looks upon the ultimate knowable laws of the universe as mechanical, religion as spiritual or demonologic.

These differences have always existed, and have, in the main, resulted in placing religions at all times in antagonism to universal ethics, to general rules of conduct, and to objective knowledge. Everywhere, the religious portion of the community have entertained a secret or open contempt for "worldly learning"; everywhere they have proclaimed that the knowledge of God is superior to the knowledge of his works; and that obedience to his law is of more import than the love of humanity.

We may turn to the American Indians, the tribes of Siberia or the Dyaks of Borneo, and we shall find that the ordinary "doctor" who cured by a knowledge of herbs, of nursing, and of simple mechanical means, was far less esteemed than the shaman who depended not on special knowledge but on the possession of mysterious powers which gave him control

over demons*; or we may take that Protestant sect of the Reformation, who opposed anyone learning the alphabet, lest he should waste his time on vain human knowledge†; or a thousand other examples; and the contrast is always the same.

The conclusion, therefore, is that early religion did assist the development of the race along these lines, but only incidentally and, as it were, unwittingly; while it was, at heart, unfriendly to them.

6. It is otherwise when we turn to Art, especially esthetic Art. Its aim is the realisation, the expression in the object, of the idea of the Beautiful. This idea does not belong to the conscious intelligence. It cannot be expressed in the formulas of positive knowledge. The esthetic, like the religious, emotions, send their roots far down into the opaque structure of the sub-conscious intelligence, and hence the two are natural associates. What Professor Bain says of Art may be extended to Religion: "Nature is not its standard, nor is [objective] truth its chief end." ‡

It has been seriously questioned whether the idea

* Ling Roth, *Natives of Sarawak*, vol. i., p. 271; Hoffman, *Secret Societies of the Ojibway*, *passim*.

† They were called the Abecedarians, because they distrusted even the ABC. Some learned scholars actually threw away their books and joined them.

‡ Bain, *The Senses and the Intellect*, p. 607.

of the beautiful existed among primitive peoples, apart from a desire for mere gaudy colouring or striking display. No one would doubt its universal presence could he but free his judgment from his own canons of the beautiful, and accept those which prevail in the savage tribe he is studying. Darwin, in his work on the *Descent of Man*, collected evidence from the rudest hordes of all continents to prove that all were passionate admirers of beauty, as measured by their own criteria; and he reached also the important conclusion that their completest expression of it was to be found in their religious art. "In every nation," he says, "sufficiently advanced to have made effigies of their gods, or of their deified rulers, the sculptors no doubt have endeavoured to express their highest idea of beauty."*

We should also remember that the same great teacher says: "It is certainly not true that there is in the human mind any universal standard of beauty;" and this is so, both of the human form and of those expressions of the beautiful which appeal to the ear and the touch. The music and the metre of one race generally displease another; and there is no one norm by which the superiority of either can be absolutely ascertained.

In their own way, however, Art and Religion have

* *The Descent of Man*, p. 581.

this in common, that they make a study of Perfection, and aim to embody it in actuality; whereas Science or positive knowledge confines itself to reality, which is ever imperfect.

Perfection is, however, an unconditioned mode of existence, not measurable by our senses, and hence outside the domain of inductive research. The tendency of organic forms and cosmic motions is always toward it, but they always fall short of it.* We are aware of it only through the longings of our subconscious minds, not through the laws of our reasoning intelligence. Yet so intense is our conviction, not only that it is true, but that final truth lies in it alone, that it has ever been and will ever be the highest and strongest motive of human action.

Beginning with those arts which are avowedly the expression of beauty in line, colour, or form, it is easy to show how they were fostered by the religious sense. The inscribed shells and tablets from the mounds of the Mississippi Valley present complex and symmetrical drawings, clearly intended for some mythical being or supernatural personage.

Among the Salishan Indians of British Columbia, when a girl reaches maturity she must go alone to

* As Wilhelm von Humboldt remarked: "Das Streben der Natur ist auf etwas Unbeschränktes gerichtet." The meaning of this profound observation is ably discussed by Steinthal, *Die sprachphilosophischen Werke W. von Humboldt's*, p. 178.

the hills and undergo a long period of retirement. At its close, she records her experiences by drawing a number of rude figures in red paint on a boulder, indicating the rites she has performed and the visions she has had.* Such rock-writing, or petroglyphs, nearly always of religious import, are found in every continent, and offer the beginnings of the art of drawing.

It is possible that the oldest known examples, scratched with a flint on the bones of reindeers dug up in the caves of southern France, may represent the totems or deified heroes of the clan. Certain it is that a class of symbolic figures, which recur the world over, often dating from remote ages, such as the crescent, the cross, the svastika, the triskeles, the circle, and the square, were of religious intention, and conveyed mystic knowledge or supernatural protection in the opinion of those who drew them.

The early cultivation of painting in religious art arose chiefly from the symbolism of colours, to which I previously made a passing allusion. Its origin was in the effect which certain hues have upon the mind, either specifically or from association. Colour-symbolism, indeed, forms a prominent feature in nearly every primitive religion. The import of the different colours varies, but not to the degree which ex-

* *Bull. Amer. Museum Nat. History*, vol, viii., p. 227.

cludes some general tendencies. The white and the blue are usually of cheerful and peaceful signification, the black and the red are ominous of strife and darkness. In many tribes the yellow bore the deepest religious meaning. The Mayas of Yucatan assigned it to the dawn and the east; and when the Aztecs gathered around the dying bed of one they loved, and raised their voices in the pean which was to waft the soul to its higher life beyond the grave, they sang: "Already does the dawn appear, the light advances. Already do the birds of yellow plumage tune their songs to greet thee."

These symbolic colours are those with which the early temples were tinted and the rude images of the gods stained. They were rarely harmonious, but they were effective, and appealed to the people for whom they were intended. Their preparation and their technical employment were improved, and, as the art advanced, it reacted on the religion, directing its conceptions of divinity into higher walks and toward nobler ideals.

Art in line and colour is of vast antiquity, probably preceding that in shape or form, carving or sculpture. But this, too, we find was fairly understood by the cave-dwellers of France and Switzerland at a time when the great glacier still covered a good part of the European continent, and there is scarcely

a savage tribe to-day that does not make some rude attempts at carving the images of its deities.

A natural object which has a chance resemblance to a man or beast is chosen as a fetish, and the worshipper by chipping or rubbing increases slightly the likeness. This is the infancy of the sculptor's art, and it is usually for a religious purpose that it is exercised. Soon it is developed, and in stone, or bone, or wood, in baked clay, or rags, or leaves, we find thousands of effigies in use to represent the tutelary deities and the other denizens of the supernatural world.

So prominent was the early progress of religious art in this direction that it gave the name to early religion itself. It was distinctly "idolatry," or "image worship," the objective expression overwhelming the inward sentiment.

Its excess in this direction led to reactions and protests as long ago as the dawn of history. "Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven image, nor the likeness of anything," was a command taken so literally that it has swept away ever since in some of the Semitic peoples all interest in plastic or pictorial art, whether sacred or secular. It was believed that the contemplation of a divinity not represented by any visible object would maintain and develop a higher conception than if portrayed

under tangible form, no matter how beautiful or how symbolic.

This opinion would not and did not exclude the cultivation of the beautiful under non-sensuous forms, such as appeal to the ear rather than to the eye. I refer to metre and music, to oratory and literary composition.

From some cause which it might be difficult to explain satisfactorily the natural expression of religious emotion in language is universally metrical. The rites of every barbarous tribe are conducted in or accompanied by rude chants or songs, which both stimulate the religious feelings and give appropriate vent to them. Many of these chants are mere repetitions of phrases, or refrains, destitute of meaning, but they answer the purpose, and are the germs from which, in appropriate surroundings, have been developed the great poems of the race, the inspirations of its immortal bards.

Hundreds of examples of these primitive religious chants have been collected of recent years, when, for the first time, their ethnologic importance has been understood. They present a striking similarity, whether from the Polynesian Islands, the desert-dwellers of Australia, or the Navahoes and Sioux of our own reservations. Many of them are scarcely more than inarticulate cries, but even these have a

certain likeness, containing the same class of vowels, and often leading, through this physiological correlation of sound to emotion, to similar words in the religious language of far-distant peoples.

Everywhere we find these metrical outbursts controlled by the sense of rhythmical repetition; and it was to accentuate this that instruments of music were first invented. Their rudest forms may be seen in the two flat sticks which the Australians use to beat time for their singing in their *corroborees*, or festal ceremonies; or in the hollow log, pounded by a club, which some Central American tribes still employ. All the native American musical instruments appear to have been first invented for aiding the ritual; and tradition assigns with probability the same origin for most of those in the Old World.

Uniform rhythmic motion is a powerful means of intensifying collective suggestion; and its action is the more potent the more we yield our minds to the control of their unconscious activities,—the realm in which the religious sentiment is supreme.

In the initiation ceremonies of the Australians—called the *Bora*—the youth are obliged to listen to long speeches from the old men, containing instructions in conduct and the ancestral religious beliefs. Such customs as this,—and in one or another form they are universal in primitive religions—led to the

development of the art of Oratory. It was cultivated assiduously in primitive conditions. We have several volumes largely filled with the prolix addresses of the Aztec priests and priestesses on various solemn occasions, as birth, entering adult life, marriage, etc.* To learn these long formulas by heart was one of the duties, and not an easy one, of the neophytes.

In most tribes they are couched in forms apart from those of daily use, the words being unusual, with full vowels and sonorous terminations. Some of these peculiarities survive in the "pulpit eloquence" of our own day, testifying to the influence of religious thought on the development of the modes of dignified expression.

It was in this connection and under this inspiration that man invented the greatest boon which humanity has ever enjoyed,—a system of writing, a means of recording and preserving facts and ideas. Our present alphabet is traced lineally back to the sacred picture-writing of ancient Egypt; and the less efficient method employed by the natives of Mexico and Central America originated in devices to preserve the liturgic songs and religious formulas. For generations, in both areas, its chief cultivation and extension lay with the priestly class: although

* They were preserved in the original tongue by the first missionaries, Sahagun, Olmos, Bautista, etc., and have, in part, been published.

its final application to the uses of daily life was due to merchants rather than to scholars.

This discovery made possible such a treasure as a literature; and that we find its beginnings and oldest memorials chiefly of religious contents is ample testimony to this incalculable debt we owe to the religious sentiment. The papyri of Egypt, the codices of Central America, the Sanscrit Rig Veda, and the Persian Vendidad testify to the diligence with which the ancient worshippers sought to preserve the sacred chants and formulas.

We discern the same anxiety among rude savages to pass down in their integrity the liturgies of their worship; and in the "meday sticks" of the Chipeways and the curiously incised wooden tablets of Easter Island, we have the beginnings of written literature,—always the purpose being religious in character.

It is unnecessary to dwell in detail upon the fostering influence of early religion on the useful arts. In their numerous applications to the ritual and the objective expression of the religious sentiment, they were constantly stimulated by it and by the reward it was ever prepared to offer, both in this world and that to come.

But one art of utility was so pre-eminently religious in its source that it merits especial comment, that

is, building or architecture. Nearly all the great monuments of the ancient world, most of the important structures of primitive tribes everywhere, have in them something religious in aim, or are avowedly so. We know little or nothing of the builders of the mysterious "megalithic monuments," the dolmens and cromlechs which to the number of thousands rise on the soil of France and England; but their arrangement and character leave no doubt that they were for some religious purpose. So the mighty piles which excite our astonishment in the valley of the Nile or the Euphrates, or on the highlands of Mexico, or in the tropical forests of Yucatan, reveal the same inspiration.

In his altars and temples, in his shrines and funerary monuments, his fanes and cathedrals, man has at all times expended his efforts and his means with a prodigality lavished on no other edifices. The orders of architecture arose from his desire to erect dwellings worthy of the god who should inhabit them. No beauty of line, no majesty of proportion, no abundance of decoration, was too great to secure this purpose. Such surroundings in time imparted dignity and permanence to the cult, and embellished the religious sentiment through noble artistic associations.

7. Let us now turn from these considerations of a general nature to the more pointed one, whether

primitive religions exerted an improving influence on the independent life of the individual; for that is the test to which all institutions should finally be brought.

The savage is not the type of a free man, although in popular estimation he is generally so considered. He is, in fact, tyrannically fettered by traditional laws and tribal customs. He is merged in his clan or gens, against whose rules, often most painful and arbitrary, he dares take no step. As an individual, he cannot escape from their invisible chains.*

His only avenue to permitted freedom is through the higher law of his personal religion. If he pleads that his own tutelary spirit has ordered him to an act contrary to custom, or that his own magical powers enable him to defy established usage, his disregard of it will be condoned.

In savage life, the inspired and the insane are always ranked in the same category as above the law. Among the Kamschatkans, if a man declares that his personal divinity has in a dream commanded him to unite with some woman of the tribe, it is her duty to obey, no matter what her position or relationship.†

*This is further set forth in Rostock, *Das Religionswesen der rohesten Naturvölker*, p. 145, *sq.*; and Curr, *The Australian Race*, vol. i., pp. 51–54.

†Klemm, *Culturgeschichte*, Bd. ii., s. 309.

Although at times this freedom was doubtless abused, it secured for the individual a degree of personal liberty which he could have attained in no other manner. By recognising a law for the single conscience above that of either ancestral usage or popular religion, it paved the way to the development of the individual, free from all restraints other than his clear judgment would lay upon himself.

He who possessed the hidden knowledge, the esoteric *gnosis*, was by that knowledge released from bondage to his fellow-men. As the poet Chapman so well says:

> "There is no danger to a man who knows
> What life and death is; there 's not any law
> Exceeds his knowledge: neither is it lawful
> That he should stoop to any other law."

This sense of superiority to all surroundings is disclosed everywhere in mystic religions. A Hindu prophetess was a few years ago imprisoned by the English civic judge for violation of the local laws and disturbing the peace. Her only statement in defence was: "Years ago, when a girl, I met in the jungle, face to face, the god Siva. He entered into my bosom. He abides in me now. My blessing is his blessing; my curse his curse."* The Malay,

* Walthouse, in *Jour. Anthrop. Soc.*, vol. xiv., p. 189.

when he "runs amuck," regards himself exonerated from all restraint, moral or social; and that custom and belief are not confined to his race.*

It was held among the ancients that those who are "born of God," that is, inspired by the divine afflatus, are not only above human law, but "are not subject even to the decrees of Fate." †

The ceremonial law, so powerful in primitive condition, must have exerted a beneficial influence on the training of the individual. Its severe restrictions, its minute and ceaseless regulations of his life, taught him self-control and self-sacrifice. His first duty was not to himself but to the other members of his clan or totem. Obedience and systematic restraint were useful lessons inculcated on him from earliest childhood. The Congo Negro, the Andaman Islander, the American Indian, for whom his sponsors had taken vows at his birth, grew up to consider the fulfilment of these the chief end of his life. Their violation would entail disaster and disgrace not merely on himself but on his people. His religious education, therefore, cultivated in him some

* The *amok* of the Malays, the *mali-mali* of the Tagalese, etc., is a maniacal religious psychosis in which the subject will rush violently through a street, killing or wounding any one he meets. See Dr. Rasch's discussion of it in *Centralblatt für Anthropologie*, vol. i., p. 54, who considers it a "suggestive influence." Similar examples are common among American Indians.

† Arnobius, *Adversus Gentes*, bk. ii., cap. 62.

of the finest qualities of perfected manhood,—self-abnegation and altruism; for, as Professor Granger well says, "The primitive idea of holiness implies as its chief element, relation to the *communal* life." *

If, therefore, with some writers, we must concede that in primitive conditions the individual was ever conceived with reference to the gens or community, on the other hand, we must recognise the potency of the religious element occasionally to separate him from others as one of "the elect"; to train him in self-realisation and self-government; and to cherish in his mind the germs of a free personality. †

More difficult is the decision of the question whether primitive religions increased the happiness of the individual.

I have mentioned more than once the generally joyous character of many of them, as seen in their rituals. But it would be a grave error not to dwell also upon the dread of evil spirits which is so conspicuous a part of most, and which keeps their votaries in a state of perpetual anxiety. Nor can the self-sacrifice I have referred to increase the cheerful-

* *Worship of the Romans*, p. 211. This was, of course, but one side of it, though usually the most important.

† Professor Lazarus observes: "In der Religion zeigt sich der ganze Mensch" (*Zeitschrift für Völkerpsychologie*, Bd. i., s. 47). That is, that the individual in no other condition of mind realises and reveals his full personality so completely as in that which is created by the religious sentiment.

ness of life, associated as it often is with painful mutilations, with prolonged fasting, and exposure to cold and heat. The cruelty of the ceremonies is often shocking, the edicts of the religious code merciless.

To compensate this, "the fearful looking forward to the wrath to come," the fertile source of mental misery in advanced faiths, scarcely exists in those of primitive conditions. Death itself is thus deprived of its greatest terror, and the indifference with which it is met by most savages is matter of common note among travellers.

Nor does there exist in primitive conditions that fertile source of human misery, religious bigotry or intolerance, with its fatal train of persecutions, torture, and suspicion. The bloodiest sacrifices of heathendom have never entailed such personal unhappiness as the gloomy fanaticism of some forms of Christianity.

All these several lines of development are, it will be noted, external to religion itself. They modify it, and are modified by it. But there are other changes, wrought within the religious sense itself, which we must now consider.

Religions, like all other institutions, are subject to growth and decay, evolution and retrogression, development and death.

The vast majority of primitive faiths have disappeared totally, leaving no trace behind except the nameless images of their gods, or not even these. They were obliterated by conquest, or merged and lost in other forms of belief, or degenerated and petrified until they died a natural death.

Others grew and extended, vitalised by new thoughts, appropriate to the new environment, or were carried far and wide by victorious rulers or enthusiastic votaries. It is generally true, as Professor Toy has observed, that, in early conditions, the life of a religion depends on the life of the tribe or state which has adopted it, and that "the larger the community, the more persistent and vigorous its religion will be."*

But the secret of success lay within rather than without; the particular faith must pass through certain internal transformations in order to fit it for the wider field opened to it. The chief of these stadia of progress may be described as a transference of religious thought: 1. From the object to the symbol; 2. From the ceremonial law to the personal ideal; and 3. From the tribal to the national conception of religion.

1. The rudest phases of religion connect the ideas of the Divine with particular external objects, a tree,

* *Judaism and Christianity*, pp. 5-7.

a rock, a special place, around which grow up a series of local myths and usages. Such ideas, to develop, must break away from these connections with concrete and localised relations. They must become generalised, and the symbol be substituted for the object.

Instead of a particular tree, for instance, the sign of the tree, the cross or the pole *(asherim)*, will be adopted. This represents not the original object but the personified activity, the spirit or god which was supposed earlier to inhabit the given object or spot.

Thus the mind is freed from its bondage to a purely material, geographically single, perception, and the first step is taken toward universal or world-ideas of divinity. In metaphysical terms, it is a passage from the concrete to the abstract, from the particular to the general, from the real to the ideal; a line of progress which must necessarily be followed by man's intelligence in order to develop his especially human attributes.

2. The second important step was that which substituted for the bare and cold prescriptions of the ceremonial law the ideal of personal perfection. The beginnings of this are visible even in the lowest faiths, as we see in their veneration of those who, they considered, had fulfilled most completely their

notions of duty. Such persons were held to have descended from the gods, or were inspired by them.

It is true these early ideals are of little more than physical strength and mental cunning; but their attributes gradually expanded to include corporeal beauty, intellectual power, and ethical grandeur.

We thus arrive, still in primitive conditions, to such personal ideals as Quetzalcoatl among the Aztecs, of whom it was said in their legends that he was of majestic presence, chaste in life, averse to war, wise and generous in actions, and delighting in the cultivation of the arts of peace; or as we see among the Peruvians, in their culture hero Tonapa, of whose teachings a Catholic writer of the sixteenth century says: "So closely did they resemble the precepts of Jesus, that nothing was lacking in them but His name and that of His Father." *

When these ideals were not distinctly men, but were partially or wholly divine, nevertheless the contemplation of an existence whose chief aim was to do good to those who complied with his instructions, to protect those who fled to him, and to grant the petitions of those who prayed to him, was both a comforting and ennobling conception.

3. Professor Thiele in his work on the ancient

* The literature relating to these august characters in American legendary literature is presented in my *American Hero-Myths*, *passim*; also, *Myths of the New World*, pp. 336, 337.

Egyptian religion makes the wise observation : " The revolution brought about by religious universalism is the greatest and most complete which the history of the world can show." *

It is true that no primitive religion aimed at universalism or even deemed it desirable or possible. The gods of the gens or tribe belonged to that community, were its own exclusively, and stood in antagonism to all other gods. There was no notion of proselytising or missionary work, no desire to extend the worship of the tribal god beyond the limits of the tribe.

This exclusiveness was broken down by the intercommunication of tribes, their confederations and conquests, which forced the religious conceptions to take broader views. The priests and philosophers began to recognise in the deities of other nations types of their own, as we see in Greek and Roman writers. This gradually led to the comprehensive speculations of the world-religions, in which all men are considered to stand equally before God, and all entitled to the same share of His grace.

The early stages of these transitions are easily recognised in primitive faiths. The adoption of foreign gods appears early. When a tribe met with frequent reverses, it began to distrust the power of

* *Ancient Egyptian Religion*, Introduction.

its own deities, and apply to those of its conquerors for aid. The custom of exogamy introduced divinities of other gentes. Personal and communal wants led to pilgrimages to the famous oracles and fanes of distant religions, and the votaries in returning brought with them the memory and the cult of alien gods. In many such ways the barriers of the tribal faith were gradually broken down.

We may expect to find faint traits or none of the purely abstract stage of religion in the cults of savage tribes. Yet they are not absolutely lacking.

This abstract stage is when the Idea, no longer merged in the Ideal, stands by itself as the recognised guide of conscious effort. The conception of infinity or perfection is not then conceived in relation to a being or personality. It will still act as the loftiest motive of action, the deepest source of spiritual joy.

Thus understood and recognised, it will not be a cold product of the reason, but the warm and potent efflux of the heart, of the impulses, and the emotions. In him who rises to this height, the sympathy for and the active love of the good and the true will be all the stronger, because he will see that man must hope only from man, from diligent self-perfecting;

but may thus hope confidently from the best there is in man.

Toward this end, though unseen and unacknowledged, were all religions of primitive peoples unconsciously directing and impelling the human mind. Long has been the path, many the false routes followed, far away is still the goal; but ever firmer in faith, and clearer in purpose, man will in due time and fit season be established in this, the last and innermost mystery of his religious nature.

THE END.

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